



















# MY LIFE AND ACTS

IN

## HUNGARY

IN THE YEARS 1848 AND 1849

1852

BY ARTHUR GÖRGEI.



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## PREFACE.

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THE resistance of Hungary to Austria and Russia was broken. Kossuth and Szemere and their partisans saved themselves, like the Poles, on a neutral territory. I rejected flight; and the majority of the unfortunate combatants for Hungary against New Austria followed my example.

Hereupon I was pardoned, and meanwhile banished to Carinthia. The decision on the fate of my companions, however, was left to the Master of the Ordnance, Baron Haynau.

The striking contradiction between my pardon and the subsequent executions might have induced the relatives of some of those who were awaiting the decision of their case to suppose that it would be possible for me, by some means, to save these unfortunate men; for, immediately after the first executions at Arad and Pesth, I was requested by letters from various quarters to exert my presumed influence with the government of Austria in favor of one or other of the politically compromised persons who had come into the power of Baron Haynau.

The failure of these applications needs scarcely to be mentioned. I had positively no influence at all to exert. I had, on the contrary, to perceive that it was my duty to suppress even the anxious cry for pardon, so long as Baron Haynau remained the absolute master of life and death to my companions in war. *My* intercession could but kindle still higher the pious zeal of the Baron.

Not until there was a pause in the execution of the capital sentences pronounced at Arad and Pesth, and it seemed to be indicated by this circumstance that Baron Haynau no longer ruled with unlimited sway in my country, could I venture to beg attention to the logical consequences of my being pardoned, without having to fear at the same time that my intercession would completely endanger the lives of those whose deliverance it implored.

I was on the point of handing my petition, addressed to his Majesty the Emperor of Austria, to the local military authority of Klagenfurt to be kindly forwarded, when the rumor that the Monarch would perhaps visit Carinthia also on his state-progress in May, 1850, roused in me the desire, as will easily be conceived, to make my request orally to his Majesty.

The rumor, indeed, was well founded; but an audience was refused me, and I was referred with my petition to the Minister of the Interior. Re-encouraged in some degree by the assurances with which Herr von Bach dismissed me, I thought it best to present through him my petition to the Monarch. This I did in the following letter:

*To his Excellency the Minister Alexander von Bach.*

"Your comrades will not be deceived, if they expect the clemency of his Majesty"—were the last consolatory words with which your Excellency was pleased to dismiss me yesterday.

How deeply they penetrated into my afflicted soul, how quickly they revived my well-nigh extinguished belief in the prevalence of forgiving sentiments in the breast of the offended earthly dignities, let the inclosure declare to your Excellency.

It is a feeble attempt to implore the pardon of his Majesty for those who are not in the fortunate position of being able to do so for themselves.

But I know not the language which has power to reach the heart of his Majesty; your Excellency, on the contrary, can not be a stranger to it.

My words are perhaps too bold; perhaps the use I make in the inclosed document of the reminiscences of a mournful past is calculated to thwart my purpose.

It can not be concealed from your Excellency's sound judgment, whether both are fitted to be of use to my unfortunate companions, or whether the



mischief of a contrary effect may perhaps threaten them from my ignorance of the bearing of this step.

And thus my anxious uncertainty about the consequences of the inclosed most submissive petition will excuse me for daring once more to approach your Excellency with the respectful prayer, that your Excellency would be pleased most kindly to decide, on a humane consideration of that which it was not permitted me personally to lay before his Majesty whether the petition most respectfully inclosed in the original is worthy to be presented to his Majesty by your Excellency's gracious intermediation.

KLAGENFURT, 21st of May, 1850.

My petition to his Majesty the Emperor of Austria, was as follows :

YOUR MAJESTY !

When, on the 13th of August last year, I laid down our arms before the troops of his Majesty the Emperor of Russia, I begged that my unfortunate companions might be spared, as well as the deeply distressed people of Hungary, freely giving up myself in expiation of what had been done. I despised flight, and purposely avoided, after as well as before the laying down of our arms, any expression or action tending to my own safety; for I wished at least to share the fate of my companions, if my prayer should not be granted; since my companions were guilty of no act for which they deserved a more rigorous fate than myself.

The laying down of our arms was resolved upon in a military council, at which I was not even present. I merely undertook to execute this resolution: and nevertheless, I was pardoned, while a part of the members of this military council lost their lives, another part their property and liberty.

It was especially whose independent acts, favored by the fortune of war, so long hostilely delayed the realization of your Majesty's great idea of a united free Austria: and notwithstanding, your Majesty was pleased to grant pardon to me, while my former inferiors—the tools of my daring hand—were given up to the inexorable severity of the courts-martial.

In vain I sought for a point of view, regarded from which my fate and that of my unfortunate companions might be made to agree. I found none; and abandoned myself to the torturing thought that the act of Világos, by its consequences speedily and bloodlessly terminating the Hungarian revolution, had been accounted meritorious in me exclusively, and had been rewarded with my pardon.

Deeply afflicting as this supposition is to me, I firmly cling to it because it has become to me the ground of hope, that those of my former companions who are still alive might not much longer be deprived of your Majesty's most high pardon, if my ingenuous words were permitted to re-echo in your Majesty's soul.

The surrender at Világos, with all its consequences, would have been impracticable without the magnanimous co-operation of all those on whom your Majesty's courts-martial have since either inflicted death, or the severest imprisonment.

The dead—they rest in peace; neither affected any more by fear or hope.

But the living—they still hope. The pardon which has been extended to me, their leader, continually encourages them to hope.

For them I venture my prayer, whose boldness the sacred interests of humanity may justify, the oppressive burden of my grief may excuse.

Mercy for them implores the man who could never hope or pray for mercy for himself, although sacred duties forbade him to reject it when freely offered.

Mercy for those whom death has not yet removed beyond the influence of your Majesty's clemency.

For all, who, by love to their country, in the midst of great bewildering events, enticed from the path of duty, partly too late entered on the honorable way of return, partly could not again enter on it through insurmountable obstacles; and whose faithful love to their fatherland justifies the sure expectation, that they would repay with threefold interest their sacred debt to the great common fatherland by a devoted co-operation in healing the wounds they had once helped to inflict.

The gloomy prisons, unbarred at your Majesty's gracious nod; the purification-commissions relieved from their melancholy duty by the merciful words, "forgiven and forgotten"—would restore to thousands their liberty, their home, their respectable position in society—to the common fatherland a great number of intelligent faithful citizens—to the state many a capable tried servant.

The apprehension of a shameful abuse of your Majesty's pardon is contradicted by every trait in the general national character of the Magyars; and even in the non-Magyars among my unfortunate companions, this apprehension vanishes at the remembrance of their voluntary submission.

A single stroke of the pen would gain for your Majesty millions of thankfully devoted hearts—a secure refuge at any time—and thousands of millions of timorous, though voiceless, complaints would become most joyously-sounding wishes for blessings on Francis Joseph the magnanimous.

Four or five weeks later, several of my companions in arms were pardoned; those, namely, who, like myself, belonged to the category of the so-called "quitted" officers, that is, those who had quitted the rank of officers in the Austrian army before the breaking out of the war between Hungary and Austria, but on their departure had given a written promise never to fight against the armies of his Majesty the Emperor of Austria.

The publication of this act of mercy induced me to address the following letter to the Minister of the Interior:

*To his Excellency the Minister of the Interior, Alexander von Bach.*

His Majesty's recent act of mercy, to which all those officers owe their deliverance from the dungeons, who as "quitted" royal imperial officers



had taken service in the revolutionary Hungarian army, and were for this reason condemned by the courts-martial, has surprisingly revealed the beautiful meaning of those consolatory words with which your Excellency dismissed me. The hearts of those who have now been given back to their families and to their friends overflow with loud blessings for those men who put the thought of mercy into the Monarch's heart, and made it there germinate to a noble action. None of the public voices announces their names; but nevertheless I am constrained firmly to believe that the pardon of a considerable number of my companions has certainly been most decidedly promoted by your Excellency; not, perhaps, in consequence of the hopeless steps which I dared, but rather in spite of them; for I can very well conceive that all I urged verbally and in writing, believing it to be in favor of my companions, was more fitted to incite than to conciliate. It came, however, from me, the living evidence, the irrefutable reproach, that punitive justice has by no means been dealt out in equal measure to the participators in the Hungarian revolution.

On a first superficial glance, this disproportion seems now to be equalized—let us leave the dead in peace—for I also belong to the category of the quitted royal imperial officers. But he who, on the one hand, does not overlook the limited political horizon of the soldier, and, on the other, the events of the summer of 1848, standing somewhat isolated in history, can hardly free himself from the apprehension, that the reproach of inequality in punishing and forgiving has gained but a broader basis by pardoning all *quitted* officers, in face of the still condemned *active* ones.

The Monarch, whose will is law to the army, was represented in the summer of the year 1848 by *two* executive powers, crippling each other, and nevertheless legitimate; the army was divided between *both* by distinct military oaths. Publicly disavowed by both, but secretly supported by one of them, a *third* national military power arose, and with fatal haste *first* hurled the fire-brand of civil war from the south into the heart of the monarchy.

In the midst of this general confusion, only a few succeeded in guessing for which of the two legitimate executive powers the Monarch would declare himself, simultaneously disavowing the other; for the proclamations—which were calculated to explain to many an isolated body of troops, to which they came direct, the true will of the Monarch—were either not communicated to the others at all, or too late, and moreover in such a manner as to weaken their effect. The first steps of the soldier ordered to Hungary for the maintenance of the Hungarian executive power, already nullified in Vienna, were made consequently under the moral influence of the recent military oath, out of obedience, the fundamental principle on which the existence of every regular armed force depends.

The quitted officers already pardoned were not subjected to this influence. They broke their promise, given in the reciprocal bond when they quitted—never to serve with arms in hand against the troops of his Majesty the Emperor of Austria—from a free, independent resolve.

By the pardon of these men, the execution of the condemnations of the active officers, still proceeding, gains an expression of rigor, which causes it not only easily to be forgotten that these also have already been mitigated in the way of mercy, but which moreover might even raise the natural compassion of the masses for those who are punished to a kind of martyr-

worship, with all its traditional consequences, especially to be regretted by Austria.

The modest expression of a deeply felt thanks, which I wished to give to my words, has by degrees been changed, from continually looking at so many still-unbarred prisons, into the almost avowed one of a substantiated intercession; and while I am aware of this, the doubt again arises, whether I do not thereby perhaps injure where I wish to benefit. This doubt would silence me forever in behalf of my companions, were it not counteracted by the conviction, that your Excellency, recognizing in all its greatness the irresistible effect of clemency upon the human heart, and disregarding the contradictory views of parties, will successfully conduct to its consummation that work of reconciliation which has already been so nobly begun.

KLAGENFURT, 30th of June, 1850.

I give these documents in the Preface, because I think their contents may be calculated to serve as a pledge beforehand to the reader of the frankness of the subsequent records of my life and acts.

Those historical documents of value which accidentally remained in my possession appear in their proper places, partly given *verbatim*, partly faithfully translated from Hungarian into German.

The surprisingly small number of documents is explained by the circumstance, that I never expected to survive the revolution.

ARTHUR GÖRGEI.

KLAGENFURT, 15th of August, 1851.

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*Note.*—The reader is requested to observe that wherever *miles* are mentioned, the German long mile (= nearly  $5\frac{1}{2}$  English miles) is meant. In some instances the word '(German)' has been inserted before 'miles,' but it is feared not uniformly.—*Transl.*



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# MY LIFE AND ACTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE summoning cry of distress of the first independent Hungarian ministry of war, "The Country is in danger!" drew me from the quiet country-life in which I had passed the spring of 1848, on the estate of a female relative in the north of Hungary, into the ranks of the Honvéd battalions, which had just been raised.

Having formerly been a lieutenant in the royal imperial Austrian army, I was immediately invested with the rank of captain, and attached to the fifth battalion of Honvéds. The station for its formation was Raab (Győr).

There I found a captain my senior in rank already occupied in the organization of his company. I had known this man when I served in the royal Hungarian Noble Life-guards, and knew also that, not long before, he had been pensioned as a royal imperial lieutenant on account of his mental imbecility. What services could the country expect in the time of war from one whose intellectual faculties had not sufficed for the claims of the service in the time of peace? The preferment of such a man to the rank of captain made me fear that sufficient strictness had not been exercised in the choice of the Honvéd officers. Sadder were the experiences in this respect which awaited me. This senior comrade of mine was intellectually unfit for his post; the chief of the battalion was also morally so. He was generally recognized as a usurer well known in Pesth.

In these painful circumstances, I joyfully hailed the decree of the ministry, which suddenly transferred me from the battalion to a more independent sphere of action; and from this time I saw my battalion no more

In Pesth, whither this decree ordered me, I received a commission to purchase for Hungary a supply of flint-muskets, they lying in Smyrna and Constantinople, and to use the greatest possible speed in transporting them to Pesth. This project failed as the person who offered them could not be depended upon; and I was then commanded to establish a manufactory for fusees and percussion-caps; but meanwhile to furnish percussion-caps during the next year, by obtaining speedy supplies from similar manufactories already existing.

The fulfillment of this task led me, in August 1848, to Prague and Wiener-Neustadt. I visited several times the royal imperial manufactory for fireworks situated near the last mentioned place, to learn the process of manufacturing fusees adopted there. Introduced by the then ministry of war at Vienna, I received the necessary information from the directors of the establishment in the most obliging manner.

The war of Hungary with the southern provinces of Sclavonia had almost exhausted the stock of fusees at the disposal of the Hungarian ministry of war. I was therefore ordered at the same time to provide Hungary with a fresh supply direct from the royal imperial establishment for fireworks; and assisted by the Vienna ministry of war, quickly executed this commission. On my return to Pesth, I submitted to the ministerial president a proposal for the establishment of a manufactory for fusees and percussion-caps. But there were always more important things to be attended to. I was obliged to wait, and wait, and again wait, till at last I lost all patience, and insisted on being employed in the war against the Raizen. My request was acceded to. I had to join the suite of the minister of war, who was about to proceed to the Hungarian camp, and superintend the operations against the revolted Raizen and Serbians.

I had already waited an hour for our departure on board the steamer appropriated to the minister of war, when I suddenly received orders to remain in Pesth, and assist in the formation of a plan for the concentration of the mobile National-guard from the four circles of Hungary, regard being paid to the strategic conditions of the country. I had immediately to take the command in one of the circles, and was appointed to that on this side the Theiss; my chief station being Szolnok. On this occasion I was advanced to the rank of Honvéd major.



In Szolnok I obtained my first insight into the state of affairs in Hungary, and was, alas, undeceived. I had supposed that all my countrymen were animated, like myself, with a determination to sacrifice every thing for the salvation of the fatherland. I confidently expected that the whole Magyar population of Hungary would rise as one man in defense of our native soil and all that renders it dear to us. But the formation of the *mobile* National-guard was already rendered necessary, in general, by a moral defect in the National-guard itself, of which the tragi-comical influence on the events of the war threatened to become an inexhaustible source of numerous, successful, though involuntary parodies on the traditions of the heroic ages of Hungary.

To leave their own hearths, that they might defend those of their fellow-citizens, which were nearer the danger, seemed to fathers of families and proprietors among the National-guard a matter demanding most mature deliberation. With a most affecting pathos they dwelt on the far more sacred duty of preserving their own dear selves, and obstinately refused to march against the enemies of the country; and if their *nobilisation* was nevertheless sometimes successful, the country was more injured than benefited by it, because the expenses of such an organization were, in comparison with that of regular troops, disproportionately great, while their services were just as disproportionately small, nay, were scarcely worth mentioning.

This experience had suggested to the ministry the idea of making the personal obligations of the National-guards partly transferable to others, partly profitable to the state in money or money's worth. It was granted to each battalion of National-guards, whose duty it would have been, for instance, to serve with its whole contingent during six weeks against the enemy, to send only a part of its contingent into the field, but for a proportionately longer time. These partial contingents of National-guard battalions were consequently composed of volunteers, and were thus called Volunteer Mobile National-guards. The name of the circle by which they were sent completed their designation.

By the collective expression "volunteers" were understood those also who did not serve freely, that is, those who, belonging to the poorer classes, had been forcibly levied by lot.

Szolnok is situated in the circle on this side the Theiss.

The estimated number of mobile National-guards to be furnished by this district was about 5000 men, who, as it was said, were already eager for combat, and needed only to be put into ranks, to be a little drilled, and then led against the enemy. But of the 5000 men thus officially calculated upon, in the course of a month with great difficulty I got together scarcely 700, and of these hardly 100 real volunteers. This, therefore, was my contingent when, in the end of September, I was ordered to occupy Csepel, an island on the Danube below Ofen-Pesth, and to frustrate at any cost attempts to cross the Danube by Field-marshal Lieutenant Ban Jellachich, or his auxiliaries under Generals Roth and Philippovich.

Before I proceed to describe my acts, which only now begin to be of some importance, I think it necessary to explain the relations in which I then stood to the political questions of the day.

The month of March 1848 brought for collective Hungary an independent and responsible ministry based on the ancient constitution. In this ministry was vested the executive power over Hungary Proper, as well as over all the provinces united under the Hungarian crown, without distinction as to the nationality of the inhabitants. This ministry had the sanction of his majesty King Ferdinand V. of Hungary. At the summons of THAT ministry I joined the ranks of the newly-raised Hungarian troops. The royal imperial troops, of whatever nationality, who had been removed from Austria into Hungary, had already taken oath to the constitution, the maintenance of which was the first duty of that ministry. The recently-formed Hungarian troops also took the same oath. This constitution, so far as I could judge of its influence on the welfare of my country, met with my approbation, and it was the most natural of all feelings which caused me to defend it. All attempts made by the provinces peopled by non-Magyar races to change the constitution through any other than the lawful parliamentary means, as aiming at the overthrow of the existing form of government, were considered high treason.

Whether the Austrian monarchy could preserve its former importance as a great European power, after the isolation of the Hungarian ministries (principally of war and finance) from the governing power constituted in Vienna for the other provinces ;



and whether Hungary, recognising the guarantees of Austrian influence as the principal condition of its own existence, would not have to sacrifice to the consolidation of collective Austria a part of its newly-acquired advantages ;—these were questions, the answers to which lay beyond my sphere, nay, which, candidly speaking, I had never put to myself.

Such were my personal relations to the political questions of that day.

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## CHAPTER II.

My forces on the island of Csepel being insufficient to oppose with certainty, over an extent of more than two (German) miles, any attempt (supposing such probable) of the enemy to cross from the left to the right bank of the Danube, I had to endeavor, if possible, to increase my numbers there, and also to obtain powers which might enable me successfully to resist far more dangerous enemies—the indolence, cowardice, and treason of the inhabitants of the district. For this purpose I requested from the Prime-minister, Count Louis Batthyányi, a document authorizing me to form a court-martial to adjudicate upon cases of disobedience, cowardice, and treason, to confirm condemnations to death, and order their execution. Furnished with this document, I repaired to the place of my destination.

At the commencement of my new duties, the Prime-minister entrusted me with the chief command of a division of mixed troops stationed at Duna-Földvár, as well as of the local militia levied from the lower Danube. The original object of my mission was also extended, and the field of my operations widened ; I had to prevent the junction of General Roth's corps with the troops of Ban Jellachich.

The division in Duna-Földvár consisted of about 1200 infantry from the so-called Hunyady-Schar, and some cavalry. There being no probability that General Roth would dare, single-handed, to cross the Danube, through a country where he could not count on any sympathy, it was to be expected that he would try

by every means to unite as soon as possible with Jellachich. But the latter had already reached Stuhlweissenburg (Székes-Fehérvár), while Generals Roth and Philippovich were five or six days' march more to the south.

Not strong enough to engage the latter, I had, on the contrary, to fear that the detached division in Duna-Földvár would shortly be attacked and beaten by them, perhaps even destroyed. I therefore drew the troops from Földvár to Adony, on the right bank of the Danube, opposite the southern part of Csepel, and confined myself to crossing from east to west the line of communication between Generals Roth and Jellachich, about Soponya, by two parallel chains of outposts, one facing the north against the camp of Ban Jellachich at Stuhlweissenburg, the other southward against the troops of Generals Roth and Philippovich. Thus I should render impossible all communication between the two hostile corps by means of patrols, couriers, or spies. The local militia, which had been speedily levied from the strip of land occupied by the outposts, furnished them with reinforcements.

On the 29th of September, 1848, Counts Eugene and Paul Zichy, coming from Stuhlweissenburg, were stopped at the northern outpost line: on suspicion of being hostile, they were arrested, and escorted on the following day to my head-quarters at Adony.

I was at Csepel when the news reached me. To convince myself what the facts were, I returned without delay to Adony. In the streets I met crowds of the inhabitants, and of the southern militia concentrated there, evincing the most hostile excitement against the two prisoners. While inquiring what had been done with them, I met by chance two staff-officers (a colonel and a major) of the Hunyady-Schar. By a decree of the Prime-minister both were under my command, without reference to their seniority and rank. I was informed by them that, during my absence, they had already given orders to escort the counts to Pesth. I asked the reason of these orders. The colonel assumed a mysterious air, and invited me to accompany him to his lodgings. When there, he whispered to me, with evident satisfaction, that he had taken care both counts should share the fate of Count Lamberg. "The major here," he continued, pointing to him, "will take upon himself the conduct of



the escort, and harangue the people in the streets of Pesth against the counts while marched through the town. The people is certainly still disposed to execute Lynch-law on account of the murder of Count Lamberg . . . .” I could hardly believe my senses. This plan would have immolated two men to the blind rage of the populace, merely on account of their name ! After having in vain endeavored to convince its contrivers of the infamy of such an act, I was obliged to make use of my authority over them. Reversing their arrangements, I ordered that the prisoners should not be escorted to Pesth, but that they should be immediately examined, and according as they were found guilty or innocent of high-treason, should either be tried by a court-martial or set at liberty. Whereupon I received for answer : “I might try to execute this myself, and at all events take the responsibility of what I intended to do.”

The execution of my order was indeed most hazardous. In the neighborhood of Adony, on the right bank of the Danube, I had not a single man at my disposal, except the militia and the Hunyady-Schar. The militia considered as their first duty the destruction of all whom they suspected, or who were represented as being so ; and both counts had been pointed out to them as traitors to the country. The Hunyady-Schar, on the other hand, was a corps of little discipline ; the colonel just mentioned commanded them in person. He had organized them, he had made all the appointments ; he suffered all kinds of dissolute conduct—to him they were devoted : while they hardly knew me by name ; and, besides, the relation in which I (a major) stood as commander-in-chief to their commander (a colonel) had in it something offensive to the troop itself. In addition to this, the Hunyady-Schar also had already been incited *against* both counts ; and from among the whole mass of armed men assembled there, not a single voice was raised *for* the prisoners, but every one declaimed against them.

The jeering allusion of the colonel to the consequences of my intention to liberate the two counts in case they should not be found guilty, acquired through these circumstances a dangerous significance. I soon saw that if I seriously intended to have my orders executed, I must act decisively, speedily, and in person. First of all, the prisoners had to be conveyed to Csepel, consequently across the Danube. On that island there were about

400 men of the battalion I had myself formed, and on whose obedience I could already rely; and there were there at that time only very small bands of lagging militia wandering about, against whose hostile intentions they could be sufficiently protected. There was but little means of communication, over the broad arm of the Danube, between the island and Adony; so that when once upon the island, there was no longer much to fear from the militia, and the Hunyady-Schar on the Adony shore. But the transport of the counts to Csepel was just the most difficult part of the task; and, from the evidently increasing excitement of the masses, threatened to be soon impracticable. The greatest speed, therefore, seemed necessary.

I went immediately in search of the prisoners, and found them at dinner in a house close to my own quarters, a guard being in the court-yard, and with them the officer who had escorted them hither. The house was surrounded by such dense crowds of people that it was only with great difficulty I could get into it. On entering the room of the prisoners, they were presented to me by the officer on duty; and Count Eugene Zichy, when his name was mentioned, added, that he was the unfortunate administrator of this comitate (Stuhlweissenburg), on whom had fallen the hatred commonly felt against those who hold the office of administrator, and the more heavily in proportion to the strictness of his former administration. "I have, however," continued the count, "always been a good patriot, and formerly belonged to the liberal party." His remarks were interrupted by his companion in misfortune, who mentioned as a decisive proof of his patriotic feelings, that he had, within the last few days, resigned his post as officer in a R. I. cavalry regiment, that he might not have to fight against his native country. I requested them to reserve their defense till the time of judicial examination, and told them to prepare immediately for their transport to Csepel. I then left them, and went to arrange their escort.

As the object of this escort was less to frustrate any apprehended attempt at escape on the part of the prisoners, than to protect them from violence in the midst of the dense masses of the population of Adony and the local militia, exasperated especially against Count Eugene Zichy, I had at my command but a small number of individuals fit for the service. However, I

succeeded in finding some among the soldiers of the Hunyady-Schar, who had formerly served, and were fortunately sober. Of these I formed the escort, and remained constantly near the prisoners during their removal from the place of custody to the bank of the Danube, because I apprehended some malicious disturbance from the two staff-officers already mentioned, and did not trust even the escort. Several officers of the National-guard, who had joined me of their own accord when I left Pesth for Csepel, now continued by my side, and honorably assisted me in protecting the prisoners against the hostile designs of the mass.

It took us about half an hour to reach the Danube. Our way thither lay through the midst of the town, and then close past the camp of the militia.

At first, and so long as the crowd consisted of those whom just before our setting out I had energetically warned, in a short address, not to commit any violence against the counts, no interruptions occurred. These, however, were soon succeeded by others, who repeatedly attempted to break through the escort, and, with the most horrid imprecations, to seize the prisoners. It was now important to repress these manifestations, without having recourse to extreme measures; because on the great number of drunken persons in the crowd, a premature use of arms might have produced an effect directly contrary to that intended. The attacks even of the most furious were directed only against Count Eugene Zichy. Several crowded close on the escort, and impetuously demanded to be shown him, that they might reckon with him; and after they were repulsed, they gave vent to their rage, generally in the most vociferous accusations against him. These had mostly reference to his inhuman treatment of those under his authority.

Amid many and various scenes such as these, which grew ever more menacing and more intimidating to the escort, we at last reached the Danube. I had previously charged some officers to have in readiness the means necessary for crossing. But at the mere rumor, that I intended to convey the counts to the island, only for the purpose of more certainly allowing them to escape, all boats had suddenly disappeared. The officers whom I had sent vainly endeavored to procure some. Every moment of delay evidently increased the danger to which the lives of the prisoners were exposed: close to the flat shore of the Danube,



pressed down to the water's edge by the excited peasants, far from any place of protection !

Preservation without boats was impossible. At whatever cost, they must be obtained. Finding even threats unavailing, the officers had seized two millers of the place, and with these they forced their way through the crowd. I threatened them with death unless they immediately enabled us to cross. This succeeded. In a few minutes two millers' boats were ready to receive us.

Meanwhile the rage of the populace had reached its height. Close to the place where we were awaiting the boats, several hundred scythes, intended for the militia, were piled up. A party of my own battalion guarded them. The escort having directed its repulses mainly against our armed assailants, those nearest us now were almost wholly without arms. The rising bank of the river enabled the masses to have constantly in view the objects of their hostility. This circumstance was particularly favorable to the instigators against the counts. As often as they were recommended to the vengeance of the crowd by any agitator, he could at the same time distinctly point them out. This increased the effect. Short addresses, to the purport that both of them would long ago have been hung on the nearest tree, had they been poor peasants, and not high and noble counts ; that there was no law for punishing counts, and no justice for peasants, &c., &c., were continually re-echoed by a thousand voices.

With increasing anxiety I counted the moments till the arrival of the boats. At last they came. But scarcely had we proceeded to embark, when suddenly one of the mass cried out : "Don't let them cross ; we shall be deprived of our just vengeance !" and in an instant a dense forest of weapons of every kind bristled over the heads of the unarmed crowd in front, who now rushed toward the pile of scythes, that they also might arm themselves. The party on guard drew back terrified. The escort also began to waver.

Matters had now come to extremities. I called to my people to take courage, and commanded them to shoot dead, without hesitation, the first man who should dare to advance a step.

The cocking of the muskets fortunately checked the foremost of the assailing peasants ; they hesitated, and before the rest could encourage them to renew the attack, I was in the boats

with the escort and the prisoners, and already some strokes from the shore.

Immediately on arriving at the island, I called together the court-martial, which was to examine and pass sentence on the counts. I had succeeded in saving them from the fury of an enraged mob, but could not, without acting contrary to my convictions, save them from the stringency of the articles of war.

The examination and court-martial were held in conformity with the prescribed regulations of the royal imperial Austrian army; these, as well as the articles of war on which they are based, having been introduced among the recently-formed Hungarian troops. The office of president devolved upon me. I had at my disposal only the two staff-officers of the Hunyady-Schar already mentioned; and neither of these could I conscientiously permit to decide on the life or death of the men whose destruction they had already resolved upon.

The basis of the proceedings was the written report of the commander of the outposts on the capture of the counts, which was accompanied by the documents discovered on searching the articles of wearing-apparel and carriage of the Count Eugene Zichy.

Among the latter were numerous copies, still wet from the press, of two proclamations; one of which was addressed to the Hungarian nation, the other to the troops in Hungary. At the bottom of both had been printed the name of his Majesty King Ferdinand V. of Hungary, with the date: Schönbrunn, 22d September, 1848. The legal counter-signature of a responsible Hungarian minister was wanting to both. Their contents were calculated to encourage the South-Sclavonian provinces of Hungary, which had revolted against the lawful executive in Pesth, in their attempt to overthrow the lawfully existing government, and even to seduce the troops, who had sworn to the constitution of the country, to participate in this revolt.

Beside these proclamations, an open letter was found among the papers, in the following words:

“TO THE ROYAL IMPERIAL BRIGADIER-GENERAL VON ROTH.

“GENERAL—At the request of Count Eugene Zichy, I have decided that a safe-guard and every protection be given to the Count.—Stuhlweissenburg, 27th September, 1848.

“JELLACHICH, *m. p. (manu propria)*, Field-Marshal Lieutenant.”

Count Eugene Zichy's own depositions were in substance as follows :

When the Archduke Stephen, palatine of Hungary, a short time since, came to Stuhlweissenburg, with the intention of remaining near the Hungarian camp, he (Count Zichy) had for the last time left his usual residence, Kálozd, and repaired to Stuhlweissenburg. There he remained even after the departure of the archduke palatine, and the retreat of the Hungarian army. Soon afterward, the Croat army under the personal command of Ban Jellachich had reached and occupied the town. All the civil officers of the comitate of Stuhlweissenburg, whom the Croats could capture, had been kept prisoners in the comitate-house. This caused the inhabitants of the town to address themselves to him (Count Zichy), whom the Croats had left unmolested, with the request that he would induce Ban Jellachich to prevent his Croats from plundering. This request he had made, and with success.

When he (Count Zichy) had afterward heard that General Roth was approaching Kálozd with a Croat corps of 10,000 men, he asked from Ban Jellachich a safe-guard (*sauvegarde*), that he might protect the poor inhabitants of the place against the robberies of the Croats; whereupon Ban Jellachich had given him the above-mentioned letter to Roth.

Armed with this letter, after the main army of the Croats had taken their departure for Velencze, he had left Stuhlweissenburg, accompanied by his cousin, now his fellow-prisoner, for the purpose of repairing to Kálozd, there to await the arrival of General Roth, and obtain from him protection for the poor inhabitants of the place against the plundering of his soldiers; but immediately after to return to Stuhlweissenburg, and from thence start for Presburg. His stay at Kálozd was to be only for a few hours.

He had neither disseminated the proclamations found in his carriage, nor had he wished to do so. The originals had been brought by Count Mensdorf, a royal courier, from Vienna, and printed in Stuhlweissenburg by order of Ban Jellachich. The copies which lay before us had been left behind by two officers of the Croat army quartered in his house at Stuhlweissenburg, and in mistake packed up with his things by his valet.

To weaken the suspicion that he had intended to carry these



proclamations to General Roth's camp, Count Zichy constantly renewed the protestations of his patriotic sentiments. I was thus induced to ask him how it happened then, that, being so patriotic, it had not occurred to him to transmit to the Hungarian camp the news of the menacing proximity of the Croat auxiliary corps, which he had been aware of two days before his arrest, as was plain from the date of the letter of protection, which lay before us.

The justification of Count Zichy was to this effect: He had been unable to leave Stuhlweissenburg before the 29th, because Ban Jellachich and his army did not quit the town sooner. Until that day it had been surrounded by Croats. These would have stopped and plundered him (Count Zichy), had he attempted to leave Stuhlweissenburg before the departure of the enemy, his letter of protection being in force only for General Roth's camp. When at last, on the 29th, he had left Stuhlweissenburg, he believed it to be superfluous to transmit intelligence to the Hungarian camp of the approach of the Croat auxiliary corps, supposing, as he did, that it was already generally known. Beside, he had immediately announced at the station (where he was arrested), that General Roth was advancing with his corps.

The charge against Count Eugene Zichy consisted:

1. In an understanding with the enemies of the country.
2. In active participation in the open revolt of the South Slaves against the government lawfully existing in Hungary, by propagating proclamations intended to abet the revolt.

As most direct evidence of the first crime there lay before us, the letter of protection; as evidence of the second, the proclamations. In his statement Count Zichy had endeavored to weaken both these proofs.

He called the letter of protection (*Schutzbrief*) an ordinary letter of safe-guard (*Sauvegardeschreiben*), such as is often given during war by the commanders of troops even to the inhabitants of an enemy's country, from innocent and humane considerations. But in regard to the proclamations, he affirmed that they had been packed up with his luggage by mistake on the part of his valet.

To clear himself still more distinctly from the suspicion of both the crimes contained in the accusations, he repeatedly en-

deavored to introduce into his statements protestations of his patriotic sentiments ; and excused himself for having neglected to transmit the news of the approach of the hostile auxiliary corps of Croats, from the supposition that their advance was already generally known. He moreover adduced, in proof of these patriotic sentiments, the circumstance that, when he found Hungarian outposts in Soponya, he had, in evident contradiction to that supposition, immediately communicated to them the news of the approach of the hostile auxiliary corps.

The rules of the court-martial allow of no defense. The *votum informativum* of the auditor or law-officer, customary in the ordinary military tribunals, has no place in the court-martial.

The auditor, or, in his absence, his deputy, at the conclusion of the examination, has to communicate to the president of the court-martial only and secretly, his opinion as to the sentence which the law prescribes ; and he, after having considered the opinion of the auditor, decides for himself, and communicates his decision secretly to his fellow-judges, calling upon them to notify their assent by drawing their side-arms, or their dissent by omitting this act : all the members of the court-martial vote at the same time.

According to these rules, the right of forming a positive judgment in a court-martial is exclusively reserved to the president : all the other members—not excepting even the auditor—are confined within the narrow bounds of rejecting or ratifying, by swift resolve, the proposed judgment, without previous consultation, nay, without having had even the time necessary for mature deliberation. Thus the law claims the decision on the life or death of those brought before a court-martial almost entirely for the president ; and it is therefore his duty, in the secrecy of his own conscience, to undertake the defense of the accused against the judicial opinion of the auditor.

Viewed in this light, it was my duty to consider in his favor the value of those declarations of Count Eugene Zichy, by which he had endeavored to weaken the force of the before-mentioned charges.

The most serious accusation was the attempted dissemination of the enemy's proclamations. Count Zichy having asserted that his valet had by mistake packed up the proclamations with

his luggage, I had to endeavor to find proofs of the credibility of this assertion in the coincident circumstances. But in vain ! For the proclamations had been left behind them by the officers of the enemy quartered in the house of Count Zichy ; and it appeared most probable that Count Zichy, as proprietor of a house in the town of Stuhlweissenburg, which certainly had several rooms, did not, considering his oft-protested patriotic sentiments, occupy the same room with the enemy's officers, nor even hold any friendly intercourse with them. The proclamations, therefore, could only have been left in one of the rooms occupied by the officers while quartered in the house. Further, according to his own declaration, Count Zichy resolved, immediately after the departure of the officers, to go to Kálozd for a few hours only, and to return immediately to Stuhlweissenburg. On such short excursions much luggage is not commonly taken, but generally only such articles as are daily, nay, hourly needed. From what has been already said, these articles could scarcely have been left lying in the rooms just quitted by the officers of the enemy, consequently not near the proclamations, by possibility forgotten in these rooms.

In the face of these probabilities I, alas, could not comprehend how it could have happened, that while the valet was engaged—probably in the sitting-room of his master—in arranging the articles necessary for a journey of only some hours' duration, the proclamations left lying in another room had so fallen into his hands as, by *mistake*, to have been packed up with them. The pretty considerable bulk and the striking shape of the forty-three pieces (this was the number of proclamations found) of coarse printing-paper in half-sheets, when lying among the other articles, were sufficient to contradict the assumption of such a mistake.

It would have sounded far more credible, that the proclamations had been *intentionally* packed up by the valet, and of course, considering the patriotic feelings of his master, without his knowledge.

But Count Zichy, on the discovery of the proclamations in his carriage, might have immediately perceived the danger which threatened the life of his valet in consequence of this discovery, and, secure in the consciousness of his own innocence—in spite of the indignation which, considering his oft-asserted patriotic senti-



ments, he must have felt at the *intentional* act of his valet—might have had a kind of generous compassion for him, and have resolved to represent the evidence of his crime as the consequence of a mere mistake.

I at least could very easily conceive the possibility of such a fit of generosity; and had hereby to be only still more incited to weaken the dangerous suspicion of traitorous understanding with the enemies of the country, which the Count, by a noble emotion of the heart, might in a most critical way have turned off from the guilty head of his valet on to his own innocent one—by developing, where possible, the positive proofs of his asserted patriotic sentiments, from the coincidence of his own declarations with the motives for the facts now before me, these motives becoming consistently discernible by means of the accessory circumstances.

For this purpose there were, however, in the Count's own declaration, only three points, in some degree favorable, to be taken into consideration. The Count had declared that:

1. At the solicitation of the inhabitants of Stuhlweissenburg, he had interceded with Ban Jellachich to put a stop to the robberies of the Croats.

2. He had requested the letter of protection from Ban Jellachich likewise, only with the intention of protecting the poor inhabitants of Kálozd against the robberies of the Croats of General Roth. Finally,

3. He had immediately communicated to the first Hungarian soldiers whom he unexpectedly met near Soponya, when on his journey from Stuhlweissenburg to Kálozd, the menacing approach of General Roth with his corps of 10,000 Croats.

But however favorable the light thrown on these points, it could not be overlooked that Count Eugene Zichy possessed a house in Stuhlweissenburg, and that Kálozd was his own estate; and that consequently the personal interest which he had in seeing Stuhlweissenburg as well as Kálozd spared from the robberies of the Croats, was quite sufficient to impel him to the acts mentioned under (1.) and (2.), even in a total absence of patriotism.

But the third point seemed, from the coincidence of the simultaneous circumstances, far more calculated to testify against, than for, the patriotism of the Count. For, had he been well affected to his country and its defenders, the unexpected challenge of a

Hungarian outpost must either have joyfully surprised him, or awakened in him the most anxious solicitude for the safety of his country's troops, exposed to the attacks of a hostile corps of 10,000 men. Both feelings could only have decided him to hasten as much as possible the communication of his certain knowledge of the threatened danger. Had the Count been well disposed to his country and its defenders, the thought that, forced by circumstances, he had been obliged to apply to its enemies for the necessary protection to his person and property, would have been painful; the challenge of the Hungarian outpost must have filled him with the joyful hope that behind this outpost there stood an army of his countrymen sufficiently strong to deliver him at once from his painful position; he must have longed for this deliverance, and made haste to insure it by a behavior fitted to awaken confidence. Nay, even had the Count, in sight of the hostile armies, remained entirely neutral in his feelings, the challenge of the Hungarian outpost must have decided him, if conscious of the purity of the object of his journey, on the score of prudence at least, instantly and freely to produce the letter of protection from the Croat general, for the very purpose of proving the purity of his intention, and of preventing the suspicion—equally dangerous and unworthy—that he, a Hungarian subject, lived in treasonable communication with the rebels against the lawfully-existing order.

But Count Zichy had to be *forcibly* arrested; and only after this had taken place, did he mention the menacing proximity of the auxiliary corps of Croats, asking his captors if they did not know that General Roth was approaching with 10,000 men. But the Count *concealed* the enemy's letter of protection. This was discovered only in consequence of the forcible search among his articles of dress.

This circumstance, as well as the resistance to the challenging outpost, which necessarily preceded the forcible arrest of the Count, made it easier to recognize the meaning of a menace than of a friendly communication in the Count's question, whether they did not know that General Roth was approaching with 10,000 Croats; and testified not only against his self-asserted patriotism, but much more to the existence of a mode of thinking and acting, which had every thing in common with that of the *open* enemies of the country—except its *openness*.

The reflections to which another point in the Count's statement gave rise, led unfortunately to the same conclusion.

When the proclamations discovered in the carriage of Count Zichy were laid before him during the examination, he distinctly recognized them as the same which the enemy's officers, who had been quartered in his house at Stuhlweissenburg, had left there. He must consequently have seen these proclamations during the time that elapsed between the departure of the officers and his own setting out from Stuhlweissenburg.

Had the Count been a true patriot, he would immediately have destroyed these proclamations. For he knew every detail of the manner in which their originals had reached Stuhlweissenburg ; and could not have been ignorant of their dangerous tendency as regarded the lawfully-existing order of things in Hungary.

The speediest destruction of those copies was, moreover, in his power, without the slightest risk ; the enemy's officers, who had brought them into the house, and had forgotten them there, having marched away with the whole of their army.

But Count Zichy had neglected to do this ; and hence it appeared—as has already been pointed out—that the existence in his breast of the patriotic sentiments, asseverated by him during the examination, was wholly untenable.

His statement, that these proclamations had come into his carriage only by a *mistake of his valet*, now indeed became more credible, because very probably the Count had himself brought them into his own sitting-room, and consequently near to the articles which were to be taken with him on his short journey. But through the barefaced senselessness with which Count Zichy dared to affirm during the examination, notwithstanding the letter of protection, the contents of which expressed an almost unlimited confidence on the part of the hostile general in the friendly disposition of his *protégé*, that he had neglected to transmit to the Hungarian camp the news of the approach of the auxiliary corps of Croats, only because he had supposed that it was already generally known ; through the same barefaced senselessness with which he adduced, as a proof of his patriotic sentiments, that he had communicated the news of the near danger from the enemy to the first Hungarian outpost which he met at Soponya,—he had entirely destroyed the credibility of all his other statements during the examination ; and the evidence on which both



the points of accusation against Count Zichy were founded, acquired only so much the greater weight from his contradictory declarations.

Upon this evidence, the officer who acted as auditor of the court-martial had delivered his judicial opinion: That Count Eugene Zichy, for being in an understanding with the enemies of the country, and for active participation in the South-Slavonian rebellion by propagating proclamations drawn up in its favor, as guilty of high treason—(the Hungarian original copy of the judgment contains the expression, “traitor to the fatherland”)—be punished with death by hanging.

Before I, as president of the court-martial, adopted this opinion of the auditor as my own decision, I had to make it clear to myself, whether, and how far, from the evidence before me and the coincidence of the circumstances, I was morally convinced that, contrary to the declarations of Count Zichy, he was really guilty of both the crimes with which he was charged.

Although my deliberations in favor of the Count had led to the unfavorable result, that he did not feel the slightest sympathy for the legitimate cause of his country, still it was not placed beyond a doubt that he lived in *actual* understanding with its enemies. His violent behavior, in consequence of which he had to be forcibly arrested; his question, resembling a threat, addressed to the Hungarian outposts, whether they did not know that a Croat auxiliary corps was already close at hand; his secreting the enemy's letter of protection;—all this might just as well have had its origin in the Count's intractable nature, and in his habit of never treating inferiors otherwise than brutally, as in his surprised consciousness of guilt, and sudden perception that an imposing carriage alone could rescue him from the danger of being rigorously searched, and, after the discovery of the letter of protection and the proclamations, hung on the nearest tree as an enemy's spy.

The contents of the letter of protection only could furnish the principal proof of the Count's real understanding with the enemies of the country; and this letter appeared, at first sight, nothing more than the concession of a so-called safe-guard, or protective watch-post (*Schutzwache*.)

By “safe-guard” is generally understood that usage in war which is commonly applied in those cases in which the act con-

cerns the interests of humanity in their widest sense, for the preservation of human lives or things which either could never have had, or have already ceased to have, any influence on the operations of war.

In such cases, for instance, the general who leaves a place appeals to the humane feelings of his advancing adversary, when he avails himself of this usage of war, probably introduced into the armies of all civilized states.

In the Austrian army this usage of war consists in placing the persons or things in question under the care of a special protective watch-post, whose duty it is to protect what has been confided to it from every kind of injury until an opportunity offers of consigning to an officer of the enemy—the higher in rank the better—the written request, in such cases always indispensable, addressed by its own general to that of the enemy, and with it, at the same time, what had been placed under its protection.

Protective watch-posts of this kind are generally not made prisoners by the enemy, but are duly escorted either to their own outposts, or at least far beyond the chain of those of the enemy. Hence their name “safe-guard,” which passed over to the custom itself. This is undoubtedly the noblest blossom of the most chivalrous mode of carrying on war.

The chief condition, however, for the performance of this usage of war with security is, that its application neither may nor can cause any advantage whatever to the general as such. This circumstance must be so plain as to be evident to the enemy also.

To travelers capable of bearing arms, the safe-guard is applicable only in very rare cases : in particular only when their former as well as their present sphere of action is evidently remote from the cause of the war, as also from the war itself.

But a letter written by a commander-in-chief of an army, and given to a traveler whose relation to the war does not correspond to these conditions, in order that the possessor of this letter may be considered as a friend and not as an enemy by an isolated corps of the *same* army, within the circuit of whose operations he intends to move—such letter can never bear any analogy to the humane war-usage of the safe-guard.

The letter in question, even if only that part of it be considered in which a safe-guard is assigned to Count Zichy in General Roth's camp, was consequently nothing else than an especially

favorable passport given by the enemy; the mere granting of which forced on one the supposition that the writer of the passport—in this case the enemy's commander-in-chief—had already received indubitable proofs of Count Zichy's sympathy with the objects of the war in which he was engaged. The correctness of this supposition appeared to be still more confirmed by the concluding formula of the letter—namely that “every protection be given to the Count.”

Nevertheless it can not be denied that a letter of protection of the same tenour, *mutatis mutandis*, granted to a harmless person—for instance, to a man of scientific celebrity, that he may not be interrupted in his journey, undertaken to make researches in the natural or other sciences—would have led at worst to the temporary loss of the bearer's personal liberty; it being assumed as a matter of course, that his conduct toward the outpost who stopped him had not been so suspicious as that of Count Zichy. But Count Zichy was, as is generally known, neither a person of scientific, nor, under the then existing circumstances, of an otherwise *harmless* celebrity. By the constitution recently sanctioned by the king, he had, like many others of his rank and political creed, been deprived of an influential position in the country, of many of his privileges of nobility, nay even of a considerable part of his revenues. That he therefore longed again, like many others of his rank and political creed, for the ante-March fleshpots of Egypt, and that he had sympathies for the overthrow of the recent Hungarian constitution, and especially for the Croat invasion on account of its feudal-reactionary character—was more than probable. Of Magyar origin, he had, however, by actions to prove this sympathy to the enemy's general-in-chief, before he could obtain the letter of protection which lay before us.

Consequently this letter of protection, in accordance with the events which preceded its discovery, made it in fact evident that the Hungarian subject, Count Zichy, had an operative understanding with the enemies of his country.

Once arrived at this moral conviction, I positively could no longer adduce any argument to show that Count Zichy, had not *himself* taken these proclamations with him from Stuhlweissenburg, to Kálozd, intending to hand them over to General Roth that he might disseminate them. Being aware of the proximity of the hostile auxiliary corps to Stuhlweissenburg, and comforted



by the supposition that his country had no troops between that place and the enemy's main army, the execution of such a design appeared to Count Zichy to be altogether without danger, and the opportunity therefore extremely favorable for rendering an important service to the party to which he adhered, without any sacrifice to himself.

But these considerations led to the further moral conviction that Count Zichy had really endeavored to disseminate the hostile proclamations, and that he was engaged in the execution of this design, when he was unexpectedly stopped and arrested by our outposts.

In accordance with this conviction, the motives also were revealed which had induced Count Zichy to state, that the proclamations were in his carriage by a mere *mistake*, and not from the criminal *intention* of his valet. It was by no means the impulse of a generous compassion which had drawn from the Count this assertion ; but the fear of being confronted with his valet, from whose attachment he might expect that, to exonerate his master he would perhaps take upon himself a mistake, but certainly not the criminal intention, the avowal of which might be followed by the punishment of death.

After all this, I was deprived, on the one hand, of any valid reason for coming to a conclusion different from the judicial opinion of the auditor ; while, on the other hand, the great danger in which the country was at that time, and the importance of a successful accomplishment of my mission toward averting it—on which account I had been invested with powers so unusually ample—demanded the strictest application of the laws of war against crimes of that kind.

I therefore passed sentence : That Count Eugene Zichy had really committed the crimes of which he was accused, had thereby forfeited his life, and deserved the punishment of death by the halter.

This sentence was unanimously adopted by the whole court-martial, and was carried into effect after the delinquent had received the last offices of religion.

Count Eugene Zichy's fellow-prisoner, Count Paul Zichy—against whom the proofs requisite for the proceedings of a court-martial did not exist—was handed over for trial to the ordinary tribunals.

### CHAPTER III.

THE first important battle, which was fought on the 29th September, 1848, between the Hungarian army and the Croats, at Pákozd, Velenceze, and Sukoró, led to a three days' armistice. During this interval the commander-in-chief of the Hungarian army, the Austrian General Móga, held a council of war upon the operations to be next undertaken. Before this council was summoned, I had received orders from the commander-in-chief to draw back my outposts from Soponya, and to proceed with a part of my detachment, on the 1st of October, to Ercsény (Ercsi) on the right bank of the Danube, above Adony. On the 30th, immediately after the termination of the court-martial against the Counts Zichy, I obeyed these orders.

On the 2d. of October, a lieutenant of the Hunyady-Schar, named Vásárhelyi, arrived at Sziget-Ujfalú, on the island of Csepel, opposite Ercsi, with a report that, soon after the Counts Zichy had been conveyed from Soponya to Adony, a suspected individual had been stopped on the line of outposts near the former place; had taken to flight at the first challenge of the vidette; and while escaping had thrown away a crumpled-up note. This note had been found by the pursuing patrol, and handed over to him (Vásárhelyi.) In a few lines, without legible address or signature, it mentioned a hiding-place in Count Zichy's castle at Kálozd, "where," thus the document ran, "may be found what is sought for." This hint had determined him (Vásárhelyi) to undertake immediately an expedition to Kálozd, hoping to find there a large supply of arms. When arrived at Kálozd, he got hold of the count's intendant, and forced him to point out the hiding-place indicated in the note. But, instead of the supposed supply of arms, only two iron chests, securely locked, were to be found; and these he had immediately brought away to save them from the Croats, who were just approaching. He was ignorant of the contents of the chests, as they remained locked.

I asked to see the note in question; but received for answer,

that, having found out the hiding-place, the identity of which with that indicated by the note was undoubted, he had taken no further heed of the note, which had been lost by him while engaged in searching for the hiding-place. Moreover, he thought the chests he had brought with him would be sufficient proof of the correctness of his statements.

I found, in fact, no reason to doubt them; and having convinced myself that neither of the chests had been opened, I ordered Vásárhelyi to escort them without delay to Pesth, and deliver them to the government. At the same time I sent by him a report of the whole affair, in which I recommended him to the attention of his superiors for promotion out of his turn.

Meanwhile the armistice had been made use of by Ban Jellachich for such a speedy flank-march from his position, after the battle on the 29th September, toward Raab, that it became impossible for General Roth to overtake him with his auxiliary corps, which was consequently exposed to the danger of meeting with total discomfiture, a few days later, by being separated from the Croat main army, as well as from the Croat-Sclavonian frontier, by Hungarian forces.

On the 4th of October hostilities recommenced between General Móga's troops and those of Ban Jellachich.

I was incorporated with my detachment into the corps of Moriz Perczel, who was then colonel and commander of the so-called Zrinyi-Schar, which had been appointed to act independently against General Roth's Croat corps. This I learned only on the evening of the 3d of October in Adony, whither I had returned from Ercsi; and as, according to a previous decree of the Hungarian commander-in-chief, I retained my independent position, and was intrusted with the same mission, I had already issued my arrangements against General Roth for the following day.

Moriz Perczel thus took, on the evening of the 3d of October, the principal direction of the expedition against General Roth, and assigned to me the command of the vanguard. He made no changes in my previous dispositions.

Our object was, in the first instance, to get between General Roth and the road to Stuhlweissenburg, and either drive him back to the south, or at least detain him till we should be sufficiently reinforced to defeat him. In the latter case, the militia,



organizing in the south of Hungary, on the right bank of the Danube, was charged to render his retreat into Croatia as difficult as possible.

The brief instructions for this purpose, which I, as commander-in-chief of the southern militia, gave to my sub-commanders, were nearly these :

“ The militia is not to be employed in open combat against regular troops, especially if these are provided with artillery : open combat, therefore, is to be avoided as far as possible. It is to alarm the enemy by the successive display of constantly changing and augmenting masses *beyond* the reach of his guns ; to obstruct his movements, by destroying the most important means of communication in the hostile district of operations (defiles, dams, bridges, &c.), as well as by removing the facilities for transport existing in the neighborhood ; and to expose him to the most destructive privations, by consuming the nearest provisions, and secreting the more remote. These are the duties to which the militia has to confine itself.”

That, in fact, I could scarcely expect more useful services from the militia, the following statements will show.

As commander-in-chief of the southern militia, I was never in a condition to know, even approximately, what numbers I should have at my disposal at any given time, or in any appointed place. The militia came, and the militia went, just as it felt inclined. Generally, however, it came when the enemy was far off ; when the enemy approached, the militia departed. In a word, it liked to avoid seeing the enemy. When by accident, however, and in spite of every precaution, it had the misfortune to come so near the enemy as to hear his shots, it shouted, “ Treachery ! ” and ran away as fast as it could. The utmost degree of physical weariness was on such occasions the only means of bringing the militia-men to a stand, that is, to a lying down.

These good people were mostly armed with scythes, and a very few of them with old rusty muskets, to which “ going-off ” was almost as rare an occurrence as it was to their scythes.

The militia-men had a particular predilection for cannons. These they drew after them with enthusiasm, even without orders. Their first question to the person who presented himself as their leader, always was, whether he had cannons. If his answer was in the affirmative, they joyfully prepared to march ;

if not, he could scarcely reckon on any considerable number of adherents. For this reason their leaders very often made use of the artifice of assuring them that they had sent their guns already in advance against the enemy. Clumsy as this trick was, it was sometimes sufficient to keep the militia-men on their legs for some days.

The attachment of the militia to heavy guns (naturally to friendly ones) was severed in the first moment of danger from the enemy. It might be calculated with certainty, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred, that from a zealous expedition of militia with artillery, in a very short time all the men would return, somewhat exhausted indeed, yet otherwise unhurt, but without the cannons.

The resolute leader of a well-disciplined corps of from 8000 to 10,000 men could therefore hardly be effectually misled, in his operations, as to the hostilities practicable with such a militia. Yet in the circumstances of the auxiliary corps of Croats under the command of Generals Roth and Philippovich—abandoned by Ban Jellachich, probably from higher considerations—the hostilities even of this militia sufficed to prepare the ruin of the Croat corps, nay, finally to accomplish it.

Perczel's whole corps, which, besides the militia just described, was employed against Roth, consisted of scarcely 3000 men, with 200 horses and eight pieces of artillery; all, except the cavalry, being freshly-organized troops.

The main body of this army left Adony on the 4th of October, at daybreak, to traverse, in the shortest time, by Seregélyes, all roads leading from the south to Stuhlweissenburg, and ascertain first of all how far General Roth had already advanced toward that place. A squadron of hussars, a company of the Hunyady-Schar, and four guns, formed the vanguard.

A flank-column, consisting of a part of the militia and two companies of the Hunyady-Schar, had been sent from Adony, by Sárosd to Aba, to endeavor to effect a junction with the militia—which lay still more to the south, on the road from Aba to Bogárd—and, by a change of direction toward the east, to prevent the escape of the enemy from Kálozd—where we supposed he was—into the less-protected territory lying between the Danube and the channels of the Sárviz, by which, with the dispositions already made—thanks to our tactic and strategic inex-

perience—the possibility of righting ourselves would have become very problematical.

The dispositions for this day, 4th October, were :

Vanguard : Seregélyes.

Southern flank-column : Sárosd ; its advanced posts as far as Aba and Sárkeresztur.

Main body : Szolga Egyháza.

Arrived at Seregélyes, I learned from a scout, that in the forenoon the enemy had been seen on the road between Soponya and Tácz, marching toward Stuhlweissenburg ; and I at once resolved to advance immediately, on my own responsibility, with the vanguard to Tácz, and attack him. I took my way thither by P. Báránd and P. Fövény, of which I informed Colonel Perczel, and at the same time desired him to follow me speedily, that the enemy might not escape us.

Toward evening—though still in broad daylight—I stood before Tácz.

The place was occupied by infantry, and, according to my information, by two battalions. Having only one company of infantry at my disposal, and that one having never stood fire, I ordered a section of hussars to attack the village, though occupied by infantry, and this contrary to every existing rule of tactics, reckoning on the Croat's dread of the hussars, even then well known. The attack, supported by some discharges of cannon, was made by the hussars with their accustomed energy, and after a few minutes the enemy was in wild flight toward Soponya, and the village of Tácz in the possession of our troops.

During the night we bivouacked at P. Fövény, and had our outposts in Tácz.

I heard nothing from Perczel during the whole night, and was therefore obliged, at daybreak on the 5th of October, to retreat from Fövény to Seregélyes, lest I might perchance be cut off from our main body by a hostile column advancing on the road from Aba to Stuhlweissenburg.

Scarcely had I left P. Fövény, when this apprehension appeared to be justified by the report of a patrol, that the enemy was already marching between myself and Perczel on the above-mentioned road to Stuhlweissenburg.

Now the enemy was already nearer to this town than myself ; and if I did not succeed in getting the start of him on the



parallel road from Tács to Stuhlweissenburg, General Roth's junction with Ban Jellachich, in my opinion, could no longer be prevented; for I had even then no idea of the speed with which Ban Jellachich had been striving to execute his famous flank-movement, and consequently could not suppose that a Hungarian column was already in Stuhlweissenburg.

Leaving the infantry behind, I had again returned with the cavalry and artillery, by P. Fövény, to the road from Tács to Stuhlweissenburg, and was on a forced march thither, when I met, coming from that direction, a patrol of hussars, which had been sent to seek a junction with Perczel, and from whose report I concluded that the enemy would no longer find the troops of Ban Jellachich in Stuhlweissenburg, but our own. We naturally availed ourselves of this favorable circumstance immediately to turn our front again to the road from Aba to Stuhlweissenburg, on which we resolved, at any cost, to attack the advancing enemy.

In the execution of this project I was interrupted, however, by two *parlementaires* (trumpets) from the hostile column (it was the commander of the troop himself and his adjutant), who came to declare to us that the Croats had entered Hungary with no hostile intention, and that least of all would they fight against the royal Imperial troops.

I was just then enveloped in a *Szür*.\* In reply to this declaration of the *parlementaires*, I threw off the *Szür*, and accompanied this display of my Honvéd uniform with the question, whether the *parlementaire* and his troops had likewise no hostile intentions against me and mine, who, though we were not royal imperials, were nevertheless good royalists. His answer was confined to the repeated assurance that the Croats had not entered Hungary as enemies. A general hilarity followed this ingenuous assertion.

I contented myself, in reply, with taking out my watch, and fixing the time when I would attack, if they had not previously laid down their arms. Fifteen minutes appeared to me quite long enough for consideration. Before the expiration of the time I received the report, that the hostile column would make no resistance. It amounted to above 1000 infantry.

The cheapness of this not inconsiderable advantage made me

\* A top-coat made of coarse thick woolen stuff.

at first suspicious, and I took the greatest precaution in approaching the spot where the Croat troop awaited to be disarmed. But I soon learned that while their commander was treating with us, our main body had suddenly made its appearance on their only line of retreat to General Roth's main body.

Perczel had left Seregélyes early on the 5th of October to follow his vanguard, and reached the road from Aba, on which the Croat column had advanced toward Stuhlweissenburg, only after it had already carelessly passed at the height of Seregélyes. This happy accident obtained for us, without combat, a proportionately large number of prisoners, as well as their muskets—of incomparable greater value to us.

While Perczel was occupied with arrangements respecting the prisoners of war who had laid down their arms, he having with his main body reached the hostile troop before myself, a prisoner was sent to me by my outposts in Tács. This man, a courier of General Roth, had received a letter from his general, addressed "To the commander of the royal Imperial troops in Stuhlweissenburgh," with orders to take it to this place.

From this letter it was evident that General Roth had been abandoned without orders to his fate, and was then actually in a very critical position. This might also have induced him the same day to seek for a mediation, on the way to which he was met by Moriz Perczel. Immediately after the events just related, Colonel Perczel marched with his main body to Tács; and a few hours after our arrival there, General Philippovich, as General Roth's delegate, appeared before the line of our outposts, and was conducted to the colonel's head-quarters.

Here he declared that the former conflicts between the Croat and Hungarian troops were merely the consequences of misunderstanding, and desired an unobstructed retreat into Croatia. Perczel, on the other hand, required an unconditional surrender. As might have been expected, no arrangement was come to; and toward evening hostilities recommenced.

We immediately advanced to Csösz, and remained encamped at the southern extremity of this place during the night of the 5th of October. But the enemy left Soponya on the same night, hoping to get the start of us in his retreat by Láng, Kálozd, and Dégh, toward Croatia.

On the morning of the 6th of October, with the cavalry

of our corps (two squadrons of hussars), I hastened after him, along the route just mentioned. Perczel was to follow as quickly as possible with the artillery.

Not until after we reached Láng did I ascertain that the enemy had passed Kálozd toward Dégh. at the same time, a shorter route from Láng to Dégh was pointed out to me, without touching Kálozd. While with the cavalry I pursued the longer route by Kálozd, I recommended Perczel, who meanwhile had scarcely left his camp at Csösz, to take the shorter road, that he might retrieve the time lost. The result of later inquiries, however, showed that the direct line of communication between Láng and Dégh was impracticable for heavy trains. This I reported to Perczel without delay, and expressly warned him, still in time, against taking the route just recommended, unless its practicability could previously be placed beyond doubt.

Perczel, however, gave no heed to this warning, but marched from Láng, not by Kálozd, but directly to Dégh, encountered serious obstacles, and did not arrive with his fatigued and hungry troops till late in the evening; whereas I and the hussars had come up with the enemy about mid-day, but was unable to attack him with success, or effectually disturb his orderly retreat.

This new loss of time, which the enemy well knew how to improve, gave them another important start of us; while our troops had been uselessly and excessively fatigued.

The conclusion was evident, that the frequent repetition of similiar blunders would frustrate our object, which was, in fact, nothing less than the total destruction of Roth's corps.

This apprehension of mine contrasted strangely with the contents of a dispatch from the Committee of Defense of the Diet, which reached me on the morning of the same day. In it I was charged, as independent commander of our expedition against General Roth, so soon as I should have annihilated his corps, to prepare a similar fate for another hostile chief of faction, whose name I forget.

I had communicated the original of this dispatch to Perczel before he left the road to Kálozd with our main body, and intended at first to leave the reply to him. But irritated at the prolonged non-appearance of the main troops, I resolved during the afternoon, to answer it myself, which I did as follows:



"Having since the 3d of this month been removed from the chief conduct of the operations which have for their object the destruction of the auxiliary Croat corps commanded by General Roth, it was with no small surprise that I learned, by a decree which I received to-day from the Committee of Defense, that I was expected not only to annihilate the said corps, but likewise to repulse the Serbians, who threaten an irruption into the country.

"The Committee of Defense seems to be utterly ignorant of the state of affairs in the camp; and I take the liberty hereby to declare, that I can by no means hold myself responsible for the success of the expedition against Roth, convinced as I am, that it would be the greatest injustice to call one man to account for the faults of another.

"Our cause is too sacred for me to hesitate to speak the truth, even when so doing may have the appearance of mean jealousy.

"This premised, I would call the attention of the honorable Diet to the fact that, besides oratory and good-will, military knowledge is essential to the right management of troops.

"The command given to me on the 2d, I had to deliver up to Perczel on the 3d.

"*DÉGH, 6th of October, 1848.*"

At the same time I wrote to Perczel, reproaching him with the loss of time caused by his imprudence, and announcing my firm resolution to proceed for the present according to the tenor of the above letter, and more energetically against him, in case, through his fault, this campaign should miscarry, to the great detriment of the country.

By this I intended, either to make Perczel—whose military abilities unfortunately did not inspire me with the least confidence—receive more tractably my counsels relative to the conduct of the war, or to effect my removal from his corps; because I really could not accustom myself to the spirit in which he began to act, and which had been evident enough even on the first day.

Nevertheless I employed the afternoon—which had not been improved for any important operation against the enemy—in observing the movements of the Croat corps, which retreated on the same day from Dégh toward Ozora, along the river Sió, followed by me with a few hussars to the edge of the forest lying between these places, and in collecting as exact information as I could respecting the motions of the southern militia (of Tolna), which had been placed in the rear of the enemy.

This information was favorable enough. The passages over the Sió, which lay in the enemy's line of retreat, it was reported, had already been destroyed, so that we should be certain of

reaching the enemy, thus retarded, on the following day near Ozora. The inhabitants of the district, however, thought it would not be advisable to cross the forest with artillery, because the transport of heavy trains along the very deeply-rutted roads of this sandy soil would be extremely difficult. For our purpose—I was further informed—the forest could be skirted only at its eastern extremity, by a pretty good way through the fields leading from Dégh by Szilas-Balhás to Ozora. But this was a considerable circuit; and it would accordingly be advisable for the column to set out on its march to Szilas-Balhás before nightfall, that it might not be too much exhausted when it made its appearance next morning on the battle-field.

The northern edge of the forest is about an hour's march from Dégh. As far as this I had followed the enemy. To follow him further seemed dangerous, nay superfluous; since the inhabitants of the district all agreed in asserting that he could take only one direction, namely, to Ozora, if indeed he intended to cross the Sió. I therefore returned with the vanguard to Dégh, and immediately sent the artillery—which arrived first of the main body—together with the cavalry, to Szilas-Balhás, without waiting for Perczel's arrival, or asking his consent.

It was night before Perczel himself reached Dégh. He vehemently called me to account for the last letter I had written to him; and went so far as to scoff at the impotency of my proceedings against him.

"Perhaps you do not know," he exclaimed, "that *my* party is the predominant one, not only in the Diet, but also in the Committee of Defense; and that I need only pronounce a single word to crush you at any moment!"

My answer, that I did not serve his party, but my country, and was there for its welfare even against his party, irritated him still more. He formed the leaders of the several independent divisions of his corps into a kind of purifying commission, and cited me before it. He claimed the presidency of the commission for himself.

"This major," thus he opened the proceedings, pointing to me, "has himself confessed, as you know, gentlemen, that he did wrong, when he, the day before yesterday, as commander of my vanguard, advanced with it to Tács, while the main body was still in Szolga Egyháza, and dared, on his own responsibility, to

attack this place, where the enemy was in great force. Further, this major yesterday evening moved on with the vanguard from Tács to Csősz, again without my authority, and even without my knowledge. He also dares to censure my conduct, and to denounce me to a government which has been called into power by my party, nay is composed of my party." (Several members of the commission expressed great indignation.) "Justify yourself!" cried Perczel to me, after he had finished.

"The severe criticism," I replied, "to which I subject my own actions, entitles me to be equally severe on the actions of others. You have to-day led your main body," I continued, "contrary to my representations, by a road, of the practicability of which you could not have been convinced. In consequence you encountered obstacles, to remove which cost you the time that, had you listened to me, you might have saved, and employed in overtaking and attacking to-day the fleeing enemy. To make up for the time lost is no longer in your power. By your fault the enemy has gained an advantage which, wisely improved, may place him beyond our reach. A lucky accident can alone make good this loss. And this, if it should happen, will be more than *you deserve*. But even the luckiest accident would be without benefit to us, if such a fault as you committed to-day be repeated. This is the expanded meaning of the few words I wrote to you this afternoon.

"I could have left matters as they were, had I not received—as you know—a dispatch from the Committee of Defense, wherein I am treated as independent commander, and held responsible for the success of this expedition. I owe it to myself to refuse to be accountable for *your* faults. This I have done in my reply to the Committee of Defense; and at the same time warned it in future to be more cautious in the choice of independent leaders. And that you might know how you stand with me, I at the same time informed you of the step I had taken against you. If my conduct appears to you to be insubordinate, you can inflict on me the punishment which the law prescribes. But he is a scoundrel, who, in consequence of such open demeanor, has the impudence to accuse me of denouncing him!"

After this reply, there were apparently only two ways open to Perczel; either to retract the accusation of denunciation he had brought against me, or the duel.



Perczel found a third : he called for the guard, and ordered me to be immediately shot.

It seemed as if I should hardly have the necessary time left me to prepare for death. Several members of the assembly, however, interceded so energetically in my behalf, that Perczel preferred at last to let me live, and to retract his accusation.

It was unfortunately impossible to pass over here in silence this scandalous scene, because a knowledge of it is indispensable toward forming a judgment on the position which Perczel, after this, constantly endeavored to take against me.

Immediately after this scene, the purifying commission—together with myself, who had been accused before it—was changed into a council of war ; and I now reported my recent information respecting the movements of the enemy, as well as concerning the positions and doings of the militia in their rear ; further, as to the dispositions I had made in consequence of this information. These latter again enraged Perczel against me. With reason he objected that I had no authority for making such dispositions ; but with less reason, that his corps was thereby denuded of the whole of its artillery and cavalry, and that a judicious arrangement of the troops for the following day was now impossible.

“ You have crossed,” he exclaimed, “ all my plans by this precipitate, self-willed, bad arrangement. I intended to awe the enemy by passing, *en front*, the forest between Dégh and Ozora with my whole corps. This is now no longer possible, you having sent my cavalry and cannons God knows where !”

After I had made some remarks on the impracticability of this strange scheme, I declared that I was willing to take the responsibility of the dispositions I had made, if the infantry was employed agreeably thereto. I meant that the column making the circuit of the wood, after being well re-inforced by infantry, should open the attack ; while the rest of the infantry, crossing the forest line between Dégh and Ozora, *à cheval* of the road connecting these places, and occupying the south edge, was kept *en réserve*, and only in case the enemy, in spite of the attack of the column, attempted to break through toward the east in the direction of the still-remaining bridges over the Sió, should rush out and attack him flank and rear ; or, in case he aimed at seeking refuge in the forest, should endeavor to prevent him.

"If," I added, "the Croats nevertheless conquer, we are too weak to hinder their retreat into their own country. But if they do not succeed, or if they shrink from a battle, they will then be forced by us to the west toward the Platten lake; and thus, inclosed between the lake, the Sió, and our troops, there will be no alternative for them but either to surrender or fight for their lives."

After a long and vehement debate, this proposal was adopted.

I undertook the command of the column that was to skirt the wood; and early in the forenoon of the 7th of October, 1848, reached its southern side; the enemy being encamped to the northeast of us, in a great hollow square within gun-range. The heights on my left, as far as the river Sió, had been occupied since the preceding evening by the local militia of Tolna. The commander of this division of the militia had unquestionably a very large share in the successful issue of this expedition.

On the report of a patrol of hussars, that Perczel had already reached the southern edge of the forest, to the north of the hostile camp, I gave the signal to attack. But before the as yet unpracticed artillerymen could execute this order, a trumpet advanced from the hostile square, and rendered any attack superfluous.

I was not present at the parley which took place. But when it was ended, Perczel ordered his sub-commanders to assemble near the enemy's square. He had likewise summoned the hostile general and his superior officers.

I arrived at the place appointed for meeting just at the moment when Perczel had decided on the fate of the latter. They, as well as the soldiery, were to lay down their arms, and were ordered to be escorted to Pesth, but the soldiery to their own country. Meanwhile, however, the whole hostile corps were to remain together in the camp, until the best of our troops had been marched round them, as it were in triumph. By this Perczel intended to distinguish in an especial manner several divisions of his corps. But scarcely were the rest of the army, including the militia, aware from the incessant shouts of *Eljen* (*vivat*), that the proximity of the enemy no longer endangered their lives, than they of their own accord left their ranks, and came running up in wild disorder, that they also might have a closer view of the Croats.

In spite of the urgent representations of his sub-commanders, Perczel seemed to take pleasure in this confusion. It was not till the militia began to seize on the bayonet-muskets, which the Croats had laid down, intending to carry them off as memorials of this glorious day, that Perczel perceived, too late, the consequences of his weakness.

With the exception of twelve antiquated cannons, out of the whole equipment of Roth's corps he could place only a very small portion at the disposal of the Committee of Defense.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

On the 7th of October, 1848, the Croat corps of General Roth had ceased to exist; the southern militia was on its way home; and Perczel was proceeding with his troops to Ozora, where he rested during the 8th. On the same day I was prompted to the rank of Honvéd colonel, and received an order to return immediately to Pesth. I left Ozora on the 9th, and arrived late in the evening at Kálozd, where I had to halt for fresh horses. Here I heard by chance that the intendant of the late Count Eugene Zichy had secreted "a great quantity of very valuable jewelry," being part of the estate of his lord, and that he kept it concealed, with the intention, probably, of withholding it from the state; to which now—so every body said—the Count's whole property belonged.

To ascertain in the shortest way how far this rumor was true, I went, accompanied by several officers of my suite, among whom was my auditor, and conducted by the principal informer, to the residence of the said intendant; and having previously stationed some attendants on the outside, and also at the several points of communication in its interior, with the auditor only I entered one of the rooms to obtain, by surprise, a confession from him, in case he intended concealment. This precaution, however, seemed superfluous; the intendant declaring, without circumlocution, that he had several valuables concealed; and that he was very glad of this opportunity of being relieved from the



charge of them. Accordingly, while he went to fetch the articles in question, I called into the room the officers who had remained outside, and, having given him a receipt for them, took possession, in their presence, of several really valuable things; after they had been inspected, a list made of them, and the cases sealed that contained them.

On this occasion I learnt from the intendant that, immediately after the arrest of the Count, a certain Lieutenant Vásárhelyi and his men had arrived at Kálozd, had searched the castle, and had forcibly carried off some iron chests containing valuables, a great number of costly weapons, and also a *bâtard* (state-carriage) drawn by four beautiful horses: that a few days later, when the Croats had retreated, the Count's stud had been plundered by several officers of Colonel Perczel's corps; that the castle, especially its kitchen and cellar, had been constantly put in requisition by officers; that those formerly subject to the Count did great damage to the estate; and much more to the same effect.

To put an end to the latter disorders (the extortions on the part of the officers having necessarily ceased, the scene of war being now removed to remote districts), I left my auditor in Kálozd, that he might make a complete inventory, in the shortest possible time, of the whole property of the Count, both fixed and movable, and place the said property under the superintendence of the functionary from whom I had received the jewelry; and, in particular, that he should proclaim martial law against all who, from covetousness or malice, dared to injure the property of the late Count. And to give weight to this measure, I left a trusty officer with twenty-four men as garrison in Kálozd.

Having made these arrangements, I left Kálozd, carrying with me the jewels, and continued my journey to Adony without interruption.

The 10th of October was spent at Adony in transacting several military affairs. Toward evening, the steamer which was conveying Generals Roth and Philippovich, with their officers, to Pesth, arrived at Adony. I availed myself of this opportunity to reach Pesth early on the morning of the 11th; and directly after my arrival, drew up the following report to the Diet:

HONORED DIET—On the 9th of this month, passing through Kálozd, I learned:

1. That certain jewels, which had been the property of Count Eugene

Zichy, executed by sentence of court-martial for high treason, were in the custody of the Seignorial Hofrichter Konrad Durneisz.

2. That the inhabitants of Kálozd, by their continual plunderings, are injuring the movable portions of the property especially, which now belongs to the state.

I have consequently, in the name of the Diet, and counting on its subsequent sanction, ventured to take the following steps:

1. I have received from the Hofrichter Konrad Durneisz the jewels specified in the inclosed inventory, and hereby deliver them up into the hands of the president of the honored Diet.

2. I have charged the local authorities of Kálozd, by the resolution here inclosed, to proclaim martial law against all who in future should dare to injure the movable or other property belonging to the estate of Kálozd.

3. I have instructed my auditor, G. R., to make an inventory of the whole estate of Kálozd, with all its movables, and to place it, together with the official inventory, under the superintendence and responsibility of the said Konrad Durneisz, and subsequently to report upon the proceedings.

4. I have charged Major K., who was stationed in Kálozd on the said day, to leave there, till further orders, an officer with twenty-four men for the formation of a court-martial.

PESTH, 11th of *October*, 1848.

(My signature follows.)

In this report the President of the Diet is said to be the person into whose hands I deposited the jewels taken by me at Kálozd; while it was actually Kossuth in person who received them from me, in the presence of several members of the Committee of Defense.

The cause of this contradiction is, that when I wrote this report in Hungarian, reproduced here in a German translation, I was not aware of the true position of the Committee of Defense, and for security addressed it directly to the whole of the Diet, knowing that the Committee of Defense was composed of members of the Diet.

I therefore myself took this report, with its inclosures, the inventory of all the jewels I had received in Kálozd, the jewels themselves, and the document for proclaiming martial law in Kálozd, to Kossuth, who was then staying at the Queen-of-England Hotel. He was so unwell as to be confined to his bed. This, however, did not prevent him from taking a personal share in the most important affairs of the day. I was therefore admitted to him; and handed over to himself, as has been already stated, my report to the Diet, with the jewels and the other documents. I also remember that, at my especial request, the con-

tents of the cases were immediately compared with the original inventory, in the presence of Kossuth and several other persons, and were found intact. But whether the correct delivery of the jewels was certified to me in writing or not, I can not now remember. It is also very possible that, having been personally present at the comparison of the jewels with the inventory, and being thereby satisfied that nothing was missing, I afterward wholly forgot to ask for a receipt: as in the course of this day I was not only a passive spectator, but also an active participator in the transaction of matters of the highest importance, and well calculated to make me neglect so ordinary a precautionary measure.

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## CHAPTER V.

THE degree of firmness, so unusual at that time, which I had shown as president of the court-martial against Count Zichy; the open and decided blame with which I had censured freely, and even in writing, the armistice concluded with Ban Jellachich, immediately after it was agreed upon; the success of the Hungarian arms against Roth's corps, which my friends attributed more to the measures I had taken, single-handed, against the will of Perczel, than to what had been done in executing his orders;—all this might have directed the attention of the leaders of the Hungarian movement toward me, and made them believe that I was the man who would succeed in giving decision to the wavering operations of Móga's army.

In the course of the very day on which I had delivered Zichy's jewels to the Committee of Defense, I and one of my comrades, who had been promoted at the same time as myself to the rank of Honvéd colonel, were invited by Kossuth to a consultation on the question, whether the time had not now come for promoting, off-hand, several Honvéd staff-officers even to the rank of general. This, Kossuth thought, appeared to be the sole guarantee that the staff of command would fall into trusty hands, when vacated by the hourly-expected resignation of General Móga and that of



his comrades, Generals Teleki and Holtsche, or by their being suddenly pensioned, which seemed necessary.

My comrade spoke first, and declared himself decidedly against this measure. "By so doing," he exclaimed, "you would commit a crying injustice; because the greater number of staff-officers of Móga's army are our seniors in rank, and are more deserving than ourselves.

"Be the ground on which you stand as an independent Hungarian government," he added, "ever so legal, you can not maintain yourselves at present without the regular troops. And yet you do all you can to weaken their sympathies for the just cause of the country. It is in the soldier's nature to be attached to his superior, so long as that superior conscientiously fulfills his duties. Any slighting to the superior becomes, in that case, likewise a mortification to the inferior. I will not affirm that those divisions whose commanders should be slighted by our promotion would instantly forget their oath to the Constitution; but discontent is to be feared; and a dissatisfied army has seldom succeeded in nailing victory to their colors."

This was in entire accordance with my own views; and I hastened to throw a still clearer light upon the consequences of our sudden promotion, dragged in, as it were, by the hair of the head. "We, ourselves," I exclaimed, "once belonged to these bodies of troops, and occupied therein somewhat inferior positions; and now, after a short space of time, unmarked by any exploits, we should suddenly appear as the commanders of those who, a short time before, were our superiors. Even although I admit that, in spite of all this, we might still reckon upon a certain obedience, nevertheless by no means upon a cheerful, unwearied one; and least of all, upon the affection and confidence of troops who would see their former and sometimes distinguished leaders slighted by us, the *parvenus*, (as they would now call us).

"You fear," I continued, "the political tendencies of the present leaders of the troops? The soldier generally cares very little about politics. He does what he is ordered, and asks *distinct* orders; he requires in his chiefs, on every occasion, a decisive coming forward and leading the way. This is applicable to the officer as well as to the soldier. None of my present comrades, after they had sworn to the Hungarian Constitution, would ever have imagined that they had to follow any orders

except those of the Hungarian Ministry of War, had they not been allured from the distinctly-marked and straight course of *blind* obedience into the intricate labyrinthine way of the deliberative one. This has been done. The government in Vienna, as well as that in Pesth, conscious of their weakness, have both forced the army into this field; and now they expect from it—the former, the restitution of its power over Hungary; the latter, the preservation of what has been gained.

“But the leaders of the independent bodies of troops, distrusting as Hungarians the government in Vienna, and as soldiers that in Pesth, have become irresolute; and this irresolution has already spread itself into the lowest ranks of their inferiors. The Committee of Defense seems to be aware of this, and thinks that the most appropriate remedy for the evil is to promote us, and send us to Móga’s army; but this measure would only cause the irresolute troops to become also dissatisfied.

“The present commanders of the regiments must be distinguished and promoted. If they accept these favors they are permanently gained, and with them their inferiors; if not, away with them!

“If the maintenance of the Constitution is at all possible by force of arms, it can be effected only in this way.”

“And who are the staff officers in Móga’s army,” asked Kossuth in return, “whom you believe to be the most meritorious and most to be relied upon?”

I had no answer to give, because Móga’s army was entirely strange to me; but my comrade named several, and the promotion of some of them was immediately decided on.

Soon after this, my comrade withdrew. I wished to do so too, but was detained by Kossuth; and then, for the first time, I learned the real object of my recall from Perczel’s corps.

The whole of the Committee of Defense had a particular distrust of General Móga and those nearest him. The doubtful issue of the first engagement with the invading Croat army on the 29th of September, at Velence, Pákozd, and Sukoró; the discouraging disorder in which the defensive position, victoriously maintained by our troops till the end of the battle, had been left by them during the succeeding stormy and dark night, to take up another at Mártonvásár; the armistice of three days, which had been granted immediately afterward to Ban Jellachich, by

the skillful improvement of which the Croat army had been enabled to retreat without opposition across the Lajtha; the want of energy with which the consequent pursuit of Ban Jella-chich had been prosecuted, and its sudden abandonment at the Lajtha at the very moment when it could apparently have been persevered in most successfully; these were the facts which had shaken the confidence of the Committee of Defense in the straightforwardness of General Mógica's war-operations.

But as the royal Commissary Ladislaus Csányi, invested with unlimited authority, and associated with him, continued, in his reports to the Committee of Defense, positively to deny that there was any ground for suspecting Mógica, the members of the committee, fearing lest the general and his associates had already succeeded in imposing on Csányi also, were desirous of obtaining the judgment of a competent and trustworthy man, formed from his own inspection, on the movements of Mógica. I was to be this man; and therefore received the secret mission to repair immediately to his head-quarters at Parendorf, there ostensibly to place myself at the disposal of the commander of the army, but really to penetrate into the spirit of the man, and instantly to reveal the least indications of treachery.

I confess that I did not myself approve Mógica's war-operations; I attributed to him, however, less of intentional treason than of want of penetration and resolve. Nevertheless, I thought treason possible, and accepted the mission; with this modification, however, that I should not confine myself to merely disclosing actually existing treacherous designs, but, at the same time, should endeavor to frustrate them at whatever danger. This modification was unconditionally sanctioned by the Committee of Defense, and had almost led to my further promotion, namely, to that of Honvéd general. Kossuth, at least, spoke about his intention of having a general's commission immediately prepared for me to take with me, that I might thereby be prospectively empowered *in flagranti* to assume the command of the army, if necessary; passing over all the other royal Imperial generals, besides Mógica, who were with the army. This measure, however, was not carried out; why, I never knew.

In the night between the 11th and 12th of October, I was already on my way to Parendorf, and reached Mógica's head-quarters early on the morning of the 13th.



## CHAPTER VI.

MÓGA immediately assigned to me the command of the vanguard, at that time the outposts on the Lajtha ; while its former commander was employed upon another point.

Before I entered on my new post, I had to announce in person to the royal Commissary Csányi my arrival at the army. On this occasion I saw him for the first time. He was brief with me. His manners, his whole exterior, distinguished him favorably from all the other civil authorities of the Hungarian revolution : it at once inspired confidence and commanded respect. These qualities are certainly not always the emanations of a manly character : in Csányi they were. The man who had impressed me at first sight, I learned afterward to revere.

The most advanced Hungarian videttes stood on the right bank of the Lajtha, being in connection, with some intervals, from Wilfleinsdorf to Hollern ; the staff of the outposts was quartered in the railway station at Bruck, quite near to the Lajtha, consequently on the outmost line of the videttes. The main troop of the outposts encamped at scarcely a quarter of an hour's distance behind it.

Immediately after I had entered on my new post I asked to be allowed either to draw back my main troop or to advance the line of my videttes, because to observe the enemy was altogether impossible while prohibited from crossing the Lajtha ; and the protection of the army, under the present establishment of the vanguard, was defective in the highest degree. As the outposts were now situated, the enemy could at any time and by single patrols alarm not only the main troop of the outposts behind Bruck, but likewise that of the army before Parendorf.

To these representations I received for answer, that it was no longer worth while to undertake comprehensive changes in this respect, the army being about to cross the Lajtha in a few days. In fact, the first advance took place in the afternoon of the 17th of October.

The dispositions I received were: to march about half an hour's distance on the way through the fields from Bruck to Fischamend, and establish the outposts in an extensive semicircle from Wilfleinsdorf to Pakfurth.

The main army passed likewise through Bruck, and encamped *à cheval* of the main road from Bruck to Schwechat, at the same height as the main troop of the vanguard.

It happened to me in this expedition, as it often does in manœuvres in time of peace: before the outposts were established, there came an order to fall back. The main body of the army marched again across the Lajtha before midnight; and I was obliged, notwithstanding all my renewed representations, to take up with my brigade my old, unchanged position behind the Lajtha.

The general staff in Parendorf had kept secret the cause of this sudden return to the former camp. It was only whispered that the Committee of Defense had itself commanded this "Halt!" and "Right-about!"

It appeared now as if it were intended to confine us to the defensive; because I received, directly after our return, strict orders to destroy all artificial passages over the Lajtha, as well as to render the existing natural ones impassable, and to occupy them. The latter part of my orders could not be executed, on account of the great extension of the line and the shallowness of the river, so that it became useless to carry into effect the first part of them. The general staff, however, would listen to no counter-representations: the bridges had to disappear.

In the head-quarters at Parendorf a momentarily impending attack on the part of the enemy was every day talked of; and nevertheless the troops were dislocated in such a manner as even the leisurely routine of the service in time of peace would not have excused. Of many a body of men, even the chief of the general staff could not tell whether they still existed, or where. Others of them, about whose distribution he gave the most detailed accounts, suddenly made their appearance in an opposite direction; their arrival having been preceded by very alarming reports from thence, of the approach of some *hostile* corps, which, by the way, could with just as much probability have come from the moon.

It can not be denied that all this seemed to indicate the exist-

ence of systematic treason : but, be this as it may, the proceedings in the Hungarian head-quarters at Parendorf made me feel that they were merely the consequence of the very same perplexity under which the Pesth Diet, with the Committee of Defense at its head, was laboring.

Deliberately planned treason presupposes a fixed determination. But over Parendorf, as over Pesth, there then hung the heavy thick mist of an indistinct perception of what ought really to be done.

In a few days after my arrival at the camp, I felt that my ambiguous mission had entirely failed ; failed especially in *that* sense in which it had been conceived and undertaken by me.

Determined, at any price, to force the commander of the army, whom the gentlemen of the Committee of Defense believed to be a secret ally of the chief of the Croat army, to reveal his intentions, I had found in him a straightforward, open man, who had already, long before my arrival, declared, without being called upon to do so, that although he would still continue, in obedience to the emperor's orders, to defend Hungary against the attacks of the Croats, yet that he would not cross the frontiers of the country unless compelled ; and that he declined, beforehand, to be responsible for the consequences of such a step.

I had, therefore, either immediately to abandon my ambiguous position in the camp, or to lower myself by denouncing the pitiful intrigues plotted, from purely selfish motives, by a few coryphees of the camp as well as of the head-quarters ; their sole object being, in case of a favorable issue of Hungarian affairs, to elevate their contrivers as high as possible, and, in an unfavorable one, to save them.

Choosing the former, I devoted all my attention to the accomplishment of those duties which devolved on me as commander of the outposts.

My brigade consisted of five battalions of volunteer National-guards—a second edition of the local militia augmented by firearms. These battalions, however, were already divided, like the regular ones, into companies, and provided with officers ; but the latter were, with a few exceptions, almost wholly destitute of military knowledge.

I compelled them to employ the time of easy outpost-service in that training of which they stood so much in need. This, of



course, was not possible without the use of severe measures. These produced discontent, opposition. Frequent and urgent complaints of my despotic severity reached the head-quarters; but meeting with no attention, were carried to the royal Commissary Csányi. It was fortunate for me that Csányi was an old soldier, and knew how to estimate such complaints. There was nothing left for the poor malcontents but to bite the sour apple, and learn to obey. So difficult was this, that it cost many a man his life.

To accustom my brigade to the divers nerve-shaking aspects of war, I often caused the chain of videttes, as well as the camp behind Bruck, particularly at night-time, to be thrown into alarm; I took advantage of every rumor about the enemy, however vague it might be, to make my troops believe that he was actually marching against us; and at such times sent out across the Lajtha, on my own responsibility, small divisions as reconnoitering patrols; and so forth.

This latter experiment drew on me a severe reprimand from the head-quarters. Because, it was said, we had to act on the defensive, and to avoid all offensive hostilities, that we might not provoke the opposing troops to sanguinary reprisals; as we did not know whether they belonged to the Croat or to any other corps.

But as a contradiction to this reprimand, in the course of the next day a Honvéd captain made his appearance with an *improvised* section of pioneers, for the purpose of restoring the recently-destroyed bridges, so far as was absolutely necessary.

Scarcely was this work finished, when the dispositions for a second advance over the Lajtha, on the 21st of October, followed.

This time we broke up in the morning, and halted only near Stix-Neusiedel, in face of a weak division of cavalry that awaited us between Gallbrunn and Stix-Neusiedel, which the fire from two batteries compelled to retreat behind Gallbrunn. According to some of the inhabitants of Stix-Neusiedel, Gallbrunn was occupied by hostile infantry, and I received orders to take it by storm. It did not come to this; for another "Halt!" and "Right-about!" of the Committee of Defense suddenly stopped the advance of my storming-columns against the place, which was, moreover, unoccupied. We accordingly encamped between Stix-Neusiedel, and Gallbrunn *à cheval* of the road, and marched

next morning at day-break back to Parendorf—I with my brigade once more in our old, inevitable position behind the Lajtha.

During these two advances it was always distinctly said that our offensive movements were against Ban Jellachich's army, which had to be attacked and destroyed in behalf of the young constitutional liberty of Austria, not only on this side the Lajtha, but also beyond it.

If, on the other hand, it was asked why the pursuit of Ban Jellachich had been at all interrupted, the answer was, that at that time they had, of necessity, to respect the territory beyond the Lajtha as neutral ground, in the confident expectation that the Croats would be disarmed by Austria, the remainder of Ban Jellachich's army broken up, and consequently the originators of the unhappy civil war be deprived of the power to renew it.

Thus reasoned the non-military men, in opposition to the views which had gained ground among the *regular* troops of the camp at Parendorf, including the two Honvéd battalions which were there. Though scarcely one of these divisions, when engaged in the pursuit of Ban Jellachich, would have given it up within the limits of the country without positive orders, they all, nevertheless, now believed that, by having driven the enemy beyond them, they had done as much as their new military oath (to defend the Constitution of Hungary) required of them; while by the aggressive crossing of their own frontiers they feared to violate their old oath of fidelity to the monarch.

In consequence of this apprehension, several deputations of officers appeared before Csányi, to declare, in the name of the troops to which they belonged, their opinion that the Lajtha ought *not* to be crossed.

I do not know in what way and by whom the regular troops had been so successfully relieved from this fear, as to take part in the two expeditions beyond the frontiers on the 17th and 21st; because I had always abundant occupation in Bruck, and seldom went into the camp at Parendorf; and then only on account of some pressing affair relating to the service.

As for myself, it was perfectly plain to me what was the duty of every Hungarian, soldier or not soldier, in the then existing circumstances. Obedience was due to the executive power appointed by the collective Hungarian Diet, so long as the Diet itself continued to act in accordance with the Constitution.

The administration of the country by the Committee of Defense instituted by the Diet in the stead of the retired ministry of Batthyányi, was, it is true, not based on the constitution. But, in the face of the Croat invasion, supported by the minister of war at Vienna ; in the face of the subsequent illegal nomination of the unfortunate Count Lamberg as commander-in-chief of all armed forces in Hungary (the Croat included), and he having been just as illegally authorized to dissolve the Hungarian Diet—the formation of the Committee of Defense was, after the retirement of Count Batthyányi, only a measure demanded in self-defense.

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## CHAPTER VII.

THE interruption of the second offensive attempt on the 21st of October was caused by the necessity of waiting for Kossuth, who was already approaching with a reinforcement of 12,000 men and several batteries.

Meanwhile the first proclamation of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz reached the regular troops in the camp at Parendorf. It was evidently intended to intimidate, but totally missed its aim. The officers of the regular troops felt only a just indignation that Prince Windischgrätz should suppose that they would break their military oath, and could be recalled under a threat of capital punishment, from a post which had been intrusted to them by their monarch, and for which they had been mustered by his nephew, the Palatine of Hungary, *against Ban Jellachich*.

The appearance of this proclamation, however, had a considerable influence on the general discussions upon the question, whether the Lajtha was to be crossed again, or not. For numerous voices rose once more *against* the crossing of the Lajtha ; because, as it was thought, the offensive would then no longer be directed against Ban Jellachich alone, but also against Prince Windischgrätz, who, correctly speaking, had hitherto committed no act of hostility against Hungary. Nevertheless, others contested this opinion, asserting that Prince Windischgrätz had already openly



enough shown his hostility to Hungary, by joining Ban Jellachich ; and that the very fact that he had done so, was a still further justification of the offensive. The majority, however, dissented from the latter opinion.

According to my judgment, the decision of the preliminary question—whether, and how far, the crossing of the frontier was necessary or not for the protection of the endangered Constitution—was the indispensable condition of both propositions. But that decision appertained to the Diet alone. So long as it was unknown, any participation in the agitations for or against the offensive seemed to me to have no object. I kept myself aloof from them.

But when, soon after the appearance of the above proclamation, I was summoned to the head-quarters, and was directly called upon by Móga, in the presence of several staff-officers, to state undisguisedly my opinion about the impending offensive, I then declared myself, from purely military considerations, decidedly *against* it.

“Yes, here,” exclaimed Móga, in evident agitation, “all cry out against it ; but before the Commissaries no one ventures even to open his mouth ; and I am then always outvoted. On you alone,” continued he, turning toward me, “I still rely. Take courage, and speak before the president as undisguisedly as you have now spoken here.”

Only after this scene did I begin to comprehend how it could incidentally have happened that the Lajtha had already been twice crossed ; and that the offensive thus begun had notwithstanding been again broken off, without our having, as it were, even seen the enemy.

The solution of this enigma evidently lay in the insignificance of the majority of those persons, who, by virtue of their position in the camp as well as at the head-quarters, were called upon to exercise an influence on the decisions of the council of war. *On this side* the Lajtha, they voted, out of fear of the Commissaries, *against* Móga, and the frontiers had to be crossed on the offensive ; but *on the other side* the Lajtha, out of much greater fear of the enemy, they voted *against the Commissaries*, and Móga was allowed to lead the army back again to Parendorf.

Such experience might have determined the commander of the army to augment his council of war, before the arrival of the

President Kossuth, by some new members, on whom somewhat more of reliance could be placed. This was probably the reason of my sudden call to the head-quarters. I was late, and did not enter the room in which the council of war was held until after all the other members had already expressed their opinion about the offensive, which was similar to my own. My colleagues, in giving their votes, had probably allowed the formula in use previously to March, "as in duty bound, agreeing with his Excellency the high-born Referant," to display itself so strongly, that Móga prospectively saw himself once more abandoned, if, with *this* council of war, he should bring the subject under discussion before Kossuth, the president of the Committee of Defense. Hence the indignation with which he received my declaration also; and hence likewise his urgent request, superfluous in my case, that I would defend, before the president himself, the conviction I had just expressed.

An opportunity for so doing was about to present itself in a few hours. Kossuth was expected in Nikelsdorf (Miklósfalva) on the evening of the same day; and Móga resolved to receive him there with the assembled council of war.

A part of the reinforcement which Kossuth brought with him had already reached Nikelsdorf, when we arrived thither from Parendorf. Kossuth also soon made his appearance. A quarter of an hour afterward the council of war was assembled in his temporary lodgings, and presided over by him.

Kossuth opened the deliberation with a speech calculated to represent the crossing of the frontiers of the country in favor of besieged Vienna as a moral necessity for Hungary, and any thought of neglecting to do so as a dishonorable one. He depicted in glowing colors the merits of the inhabitants of Vienna in respect of the young liberty of Hungary; their magnanimous sacrifices for Hungary's welfare; and finally, the miseries of the blockade, which, in so doing, they had brought down upon their city.

"Vienna still stands"—thus he concluded his speech—"still unshaken is the courage of her inhabitants, our most faithful allies against the attacks of the reactionary generals. But without our assistance, they must nevertheless succumb; for they fight a too unequal battle.

"Let us, therefore, make haste, gentlemen, to pay a debt

which must appear sacred to us, mindful of what we owe to our brethren in Vienna.

"We must to the help of the inhabitants of Vienna! The honor of the nation demands it of us. And we can do it with an assurance of victory; because I bring to the brave army, which has but recently driven before it the fleeing enemy over the frontiers, 12,000 warriors—untried indeed, but animated with patriotic ardor for the fight, and burning with desire to contend with their tried comrades for the laurel on the battle-field. Yes, we will do it! We will advance! Our friends in Vienna are anxiously reckoning upon it; and the Hungarian has never abandoned his friend!"

Móga spoke next, evidently having in view mainly to divert the discussion from the field of sentimental politics, and partly to remind us of our military oath, partly to call attention to the want of discipline in the army, and thereby give us a hint from what point of view solely and exclusively we had to judge of the advantages and disadvantages of the offensive, as well as of its admissibility or inadmissibility, and to give our votes accordingly. He concluded his speech, certainly not an ineffective one, by an energetic appeal to all the members of the council of war to speak out fearlessly their convictions.

A long silence was the comfortless answer to this invitation. I refrained from speaking, out of consideration for my seniors. But when Móga had reiterated his appeal with the words, "Now, then, gentlemen, speak! you have spoken very decidedly in Parendorf!" I put all regard for others aside, and began: "Though one of the youngest members in this assembly, both in rank and in experience, yet I speak first, because the silence of my seniors seems to indicate that they wish to reserve to themselves a later opinion.

"The President has thrown light upon the necessity of the offensive in favor of Vienna in a political point of view.

"Neither is the solidarity between our fighting in self-defense and the insurrection in Vienna clear to me, nor do I know the intimate connection between the events at Vienna and those at Pesth; nay even about the naked facts, only unvouched-for reports have occasionally reached me.

"The *pressing necessity* for our offensive against the hostile army on the other side of the Lajtha I must therefore leave to be



decided by those who, from their discernment in political matters, their knowledge of the connection and real nature of the events beyond the frontiers of our country with those in its interior, as well as from their public position, are called thereto.

“ If I am ordered to cross the Hungarian frontiers with a hostile intent, being incapable of judging at present of the political tendency of this step, I shall obey without contradiction. But if I am asked whether, in our present circumstances, I advise the offensive, I can give an answer only from a military point of view, and that from the following considerations :

“ Apart from the numerical superiority of the enemy, we have to ask ourselves not only whether our army is in that condition which is necessary for the success of any offensive operation in general, but in particular when such an operation is to be carried on in a neutral, not to say hostile territory.

“ Troops intended to act on the offensive must be capable of manœuvring ; that is to say, each division must have the dexterity to execute the movements ordered in the prescribed time, and in unison with the adjoining divisions.

“ Only a very small part of our army is capable of manœuvring. The few regular troops, and one or two Honvéd battalions excepted, it consists of divisions which fall into confusion in the simplest movements *on the exercise-ground* ; and they are in general commanded by men who, from their inadequate military knowledge, are calculated only to heighten the confusion when once introduced.

“ On the battle-field, a movement executed with precision by separate divisions in critical moments often decides the contest ; but mostly the calm and orderly keeping together of the troops, confiding in the firmness of their commander ; and the calm resolution of the latter, relying upon the steady obedience of his inferiors. In all the divisions of the National-guard and the Volunteers, these being the elements of which almost two-thirds of our army consists, we can not suppose this reciprocal confidence, because the conditions necessary for it are wanting.

“ Every offensive, to be carried on successfully, further requires certain, regular supplies for the troops ; otherwise it miscarries from their physical weakness. Disciplined troops can be furnished with provisions for several days in advance ; not so the undisciplined. It seems burdensome to the National-guard, as

well as to the Volunteer, to drag with him his own rations for some days on the march, already toilsome enough without this. He satisfies his present hunger, and sells or gives away the rest, or even, without hesitation, throws it away. Hence arises the necessity for having even their next day's provisions carried after the troops; and the army is encumbered by a train of wagons which alone is not infrequently sufficient to impede its motions just at the most critical moment. Moreover, even if we deny the existence of this latter fatality, it is still true that, from the utter want of a regular internal management in the divisions, even when the provisions are carried after the army, still the support of each man is not secured; because the officers do not know how to manage and superintend judiciously the equal distribution of the provisions; or rather, in their stupid indolence, they do not trouble themselves at all about it. And so it happens, as I witness almost daily among my own brigade in the camp, that in one and the same battalion, to which even more than the abundantly sufficient total-ration is given in mass, some companies are hungry, while the others have a superabundance, and overload their stomachs from fear of a fast-day being near at hand. What the worth of a famished soldier is, probably every one of the gentlemen present can judge from his own experience.

"The offensive requires, finally, troops hardy and accustomed to fight. The majority of ours belong not to this category. On the battle-field two opposing powers contend for the mastery over the steadfastness of the soldier. Honor, patriotic enthusiasm, perhaps also the fear of the punishment which the articles of war decree against the cowardly soldier, urge him forward; while the death thundered against him from the enemy's artillery frighten's him back. According as the one or the other of these two powers gains the upper hand, the troops vanquish or are vanquished. The history of war teaches us that young troops, although well disciplined and well led, more frequently experience the latter fate. What destiny could we prognosticate for our undisciplined and ill-led battalions?

"And besides all this, I must also express my apprehension, that by this offensive we are in danger of losing forever the sympathy supposed to be felt for us on the other side the Lajtha; for what the Croats have spared, our Volunteers, our National-guards will hardly spare—the property of the rural population.

During our second advance to Stix-Neusiedel I saw with my own eyes the traces of the devastation which our troops left behind them in that district as their memorials; and as yet no scarcity of food had taken place, which, considering the defective preparations for our support, is the more certainly to be expected the further we advance. Though I have heard from time to time complaints about the thefts committed by the Croats, I found nevertheless, for instance, the expensive props of the vine-grower left untouched in all the vineyards; but these, after our departure, in spite of the complaints of their proprietors, and notwithstanding the strict prohibition, were burnt, and the cultivated fields maliciously trodden down. The Hungarian militia-man seldom makes a distinction between the German who fights against us, and the German who wishes us victory or at least remains neutral. *Hiszen csak a németé!* ('It belongs only to the German') so runs the common saying, by which he thinks himself authorized to commit every kind of devastation on a foreign territory. Such abuses can be prevented only by the strictest discipline; but I must once more repeat, it is in this very thing that we are deficient.

"As I might, however, be reproached with exaggeration, I will run the risk of a harmless test, the result of which will show us whether we can hazard or not the proposed offensive.

"Let us issue an order, for instance, that the whole camp be ready to start on the day after to-morrow at five o'clock in the afternoon, and let us convince ourselves how far this order has been executed. If we find the whole camp duly prepared—though not just precisely at the fixed hour, yet say two hours later—then will I unconditionally vote for the offensive."

Kossuth was evidently displeased with my declarations, and put to me the question: "How high did I estimate the enthusiasm which his address would call forth among the troops."

"In the camp, and immediately after the address, very high; but after the endurance of hardships, and in presence of the enemy, very low," was my answer.

"Then you think," he asked again, irritated, "that we shall not bring back a single man of our army?"

"For the safety of the National-guards and the Volunteers," I replied, "their nimbleness is to me a sufficient guarantee; but the few good troops which we possess might be ruined by it, and



with them the material which we so pressingly need for training up a useful army.”

Kossuth concluded the deliberation without a decision being come to; but he held out a prospect of its being resumed at Parendorf. Hereupon I took my leave, and returned immediately to Bruck.

On the following day Kossuth arrived at Parendorf. His first official act in the camp was to assemble the officers of the regular troops before his lodgings, and read to them a letter addressed to Prince Windischgrätz, wherein, so far as I remember, he pointed out the right of the Hungarians in opposition to Ban Jellachich and his party, and, based upon this, demanded of the Prince that the Ban and his corps should be disarmed, that it might thereby be shown that the Hungarian Constitution, recently sanctioned by the king, was deemed sacred. He demanded likewise, I think, the raising of the blockade of Vienna; but especially, within a short, fixed time, a satisfactory answer to this letter, in default of which Hungary would be compelled to attack and annihilate her enemy and his allies, even on neutral ground.

Two trumpets took their departure with this ultimatum to Prince Windischgrätz, immediately after it had been communicated to the officers.

The contents of this letter, which I have here given only very superficially, met with considerable sympathy from those present, so far as I could remark; and it might be foreseen that the agitation for the offensive in favor of Vienna, if continued in this way, would not be unsuccessful. Kossuth might have reckoned on this, and therefore have resolved by such means to weaken in its consequences the defeat sustained in the council of war at Nikelsdorf. Several members of the Diet, who made their appearance in the camp as Hungarian *chasseurs*, likewise did all they could to gain parts of the army for the offensive; while Kossuth carried on the agitation on a much larger scale, went from one division of the encamped troops to another, and endeavored by the fire of his oratory to animate them for the combat against the enemy beyond the Lajtha.

A regular council of war, like that in Nikelsdorf, so far as I know, was not again held. The whole deliberation was protracted by discussions repeated at hap-hazard, which became

daily more general, so that the whole camp soon took part in them. Sympathy for the offensive was visibly increasing.

At first, indeed, several regiments declared that in no case would they cross the Lajtha against Prince Windishgrätz, because this would be an act of open revolt. But after the boldest defenders of this opinion had, one after another, been very plainly threatened with dismissal—and thus officers already high in station would have been suddenly exposed to an uncertain fate—the monitors gradually decreased in number, and soon the last was silenced.

Meanwhile the answer of Prince Windishgrätz was eagerly expected. But of the two trumpets—a Honvéd colonel and a captain of the National-guard—only the latter returned; the former having been taken prisoner in Ban Jellachich's camp, and not again set at liberty.

This violation of the law of nations completely destroyed every opposition, which was perhaps still striving to maintain itself in the camp of Parendorf, against the proposal of the President to hasten to assist the oppressed inhabitants of Vienna. Kossuth appeared, therefore, to be willing to wait only for still more exact intelligence from Vienna; but when, instead of this, the thunder of the great guns from the capital reached our ears, then at last it was said that no more time was to be lost; and the advance began on the 28th of October.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

WITH the right wing continually leaning against the Danube, and on the left protected as much as possible by the chief body of the cavalry—the main body of the army advanced in three columns to the Fischa.

My brigade was the vanguard during the march; but in the battle-array it had to form the left wing of the centre.

The head-quarters remained during the night from the 28th to the 29th of October with the reserve to the east of Enzersdorf, near the Fischa. on the edge of a small wood. The right wing

stood near Fischamend, the left near Margarethen-am-Moos. The villages Schwaadorf, Klein-Neusiedel, and Fischamend, were occupied by our outposts.

My brigade was encamped close by Karlsdorf. In conformity with an order I had received, I kept up a large fire during the whole night on the highest point of the nearest environs, to announce our advance to the inhabitants of Vienna.

On the 29th we passed over the Fische, without, however, marching more than a (German) mile\* this day in the direction of Schwechat.

During the following night we bivouacked in a somewhat concentrated position on the eminences between the Fische and the Schwechat.

Scarcely had darkness quite set in, when the officer of the general's staff, Nemegyei, present with our left wing, saw visions, which, with a rare scrupulosity, and to our no little trouble, he committed to paper, in the form of reports to the commander of the army, "that we had already been turned." The Raab scythe-bearers, consisting of several thousands, were immediately sent thither from the reserve for the security of the left wing. They reached the camp of my brigade without accident. From us they had perhaps still half an hour's march to the ideally-menaced point: but the ordnance-officer of the left wing, who had been appointed to conduct them thither, lost the direction, and led them circuitously about during several hours, till at last they stopped from sheer exhaustion, and left to Nemegyei alone the unequal combat with the spectral turning-column of the enemy.

Insignificant as this incident seemed to be, it actually exerted an important influence on the disgraceful issue of the approaching battle. The troops of almost the whole centre, but especially those of its left wing (my brigade) were already, early in the morning of the 30th, physically exhausted, morally shaken; they had had no rest, and were quite unable to resist the fatal effects of the terrible rumors of the preceding night. As I had foretold, I saw the enthusiasm, which had really been very vividly kindled by the President's fine speeches in the Parendorf camp, already on the point of extinction. We had lost the battle before it had been begun.

\* Equivalent to 5½ English miles.—*Transl.*



Early on the morning of the 30th of October my brigade had been advancing for a long time, when I received orders instantly to halt, and allow myself to be overtaken by the whole line ; the duty assigned to my brigade, to form the vanguard of the army, being no longer practicable, on account of the visible proximity of the enemy opposite all points of our extended line. I obeyed.

Soon afterward an active engagement of artillery commenced on the extreme right wing, and revealed to us that it had already advanced disproportionately far. At the same time serried lines of the enemy showed themselves on the eminences of Schwechat. I thought that, by attacking them, I should be the means of procuring for our right wing more favorable chances of combat ; and my left being secured by the brigade of cavalry against being passed round, the centre of the army also already slowly following us, I resolved, contrary to the received orders, and on my own responsibility, to attack.

While still twice as far from these lines as the range of their guns, a second order from the commander-in-chief interrupted me in the execution of my project. " I must halt," it said, " and attack only after express orders."

Meanwhile the right wing had advanced to Mannswörth, and the contest between the *tirailleurs* began on the eastern limit of this place. From a hill in front of my brigade I could observe it almost in detail. With an unusually intense interest I watched its progress : it was the first obstinate encounter of *tirailleurs* of which I had been an eye-witness.

Our troops, quite contrary to my anticipation, conducted themselves very bravely : especially a battalion of Szeklers, and the second volunteer battalion from Pesth, under the command of the daring major of the National-guards, Count Guyon. On this occasion he had incontestably the greatest merit ; for he was always to be seen foremost where the danger was greatest. These battalions earned for themselves on that day renown for courage.

The battle round Mannswörth was still not completely decided, when the centre of the army arrived in the same line with my brigade : and I was ordered to gain the height in front of Schwechat, southward of the road from Schwaadorf to Schwechat, and there to wait till commanded to attack that place.

In the execution of this order, I met with no obstacle; the hostile lines, which had at first shown themselves before Schwechat, having meanwhile again disappeared.

The other brigades of our centre developed themselves to my right, north of the road just mentioned, on the open space between the latter and the army's extreme right wing, which alone fought round Mannswörth.

From the northeastern extremity of Schwechat my neighboring brigade was saluted by an insignificant discharge from the enemy's artillery; whereupon the provisional chief of our general's staff, Major Pusztelnik—to whom, in the stead of the regular chief, Colonel Kollmann, had been committed, for his *début* as it were, the management of the details of this offensive—ordered all batteries of the first line to fire.

Though I saw no enemy before me, nevertheless, supposing that Schwechat might be held by him, I also made my battery play upon the place, intending thereby to facilitate the ensuing attack of the *tirailleurs*.

The attack had scarcely begun, when another "Halt!" from the general-in-chief interrupted it; and condemned the whole centre, without regarding the advantages which had already been gained on the right wing, to await, inactive, the issue of the battle which was just threatening to open on our extreme *left* wing.

In fact, when taking possession of the eminences near Schwechat, we had remarked the advance of a very strong column of hostile cavalry from Zwölfaxing toward Rauchenwarth, whose movements plainly showed that they intended to turn our left wing.

Colonel Michael Répásy, commander of the left-wing, had remained unusually far behind, while we were advancing from the last bivouac; so much so, that after the drawing-up of the centre on the eminences near Schwechat, there was an interval of more than a quarter of a mile ( $1\frac{7}{8}$  English) between its (the centre's) left wing and that of the army. This lagging of Colonel Répásy was adduced as the principal reason for the orders to halt, which so frequently interrupted the advance of the centre.

It was, however, inexplicable to us, who were in the centre, why the general-in-chief did not prefer to push on more quickly the left-wing, which consisted only of cavalry, instead of con-

stantly keeping the centre back : and not less inexplicable was the reason for our being drawn up so as to be exposed to the grape-shot from the enemy's position, beyond which we could very distinctly observe speedy preparations making for an attack with artillery on our unprotected fronts without being allowed either to prevent or avoid it.

As we stood there in a state of inaction, we were not much better off than if we had been placed within the most efficient gun-range of a fortified hostile position, and ordered patiently to wait till the unprepared enemy at his leisure, had taken his measures against us.

The orders of the general-in-chief evidently indicated his desire to await the hostile attack ; but in that case we ought to have retired at least four times artillery-range, so as to draw the enemy completely out of Schwechat, and deprive him of the preponderating advantage of his protected position and the employment of his forces.

By this retrograde movement of the right wing and of the centre, the dangerous interval between the latter and the left wing, which the enemy seemed just then intending to attempt, would likewise be judiciously closed ; for opposite to this interval, in the direction, namely, between Zwölfaxing and the Treasury paper-manufactory, a not insignificant division of the enemy's army, isolated from their turning main column, was suddenly observed, which, though presumably destined only for communication between the turning-column and their principal position at Schwechat would nevertheless by its further advance have endangered, first of all, the unprotected left wing of our centre, and consequently immediately my brigade.

I therefore resolved in person to seek for the general-in-chief, and induce him to alter his plans.

I found him in company with the President, the Commissaries, and several deputies, at a point in the rear whence the whole of the arrangement of the army could certainly be surveyed, but not at all its disadvantages in regard to locality and tactics, in their details. I told him my apprehensions ; he paid no attention to them. Exasperated at this, I could not refrain from remarking that from the point on which he stood, he was quite unable to judge of the position of the foremost line.

" I stand where I can survey the whole ; and do you execute



in silence what I order !” replied the general to me, in a haughty tone of reprimand.

Kossuth interfered accommodatingly, and asked for a repetition of the details of our position, and the disadvantages attached to it. But I was now no longer sufficiently collected to reiterate a circumstantial explanation of all these matters. I replied, briefly and abruptly, that the dispositions were of such a kind, that I did not feel inclined to charge myself with the responsibility of their consequences ; and rode back in haste to my brigade, without waiting for the President’s intervention.

The hostile divisions, observed opposite our gigantic interval, seemed to have come considerably nearer during my absence. Sharper eyes than mine discovered that they consisted of cavalry.

I had only six platoons of the tenth regiment of Hussars (William) at my disposal.

The battalions of Honter Volunteers and Gömör National-guards formed the flank (left) of my position, disposed in form of a hook ; they stood to the south of a deeply-cut field-way, leaving Schwechat in the direction toward Rauchenwarth. This seemed to me to present a sufficient obstacle to an attack of cavalry directed against my left flank ; and I consequently drew back these battalions to the ground lying to the north of the field-way.

The position of my brigade, which consisted on that day of four battalions, eight pieces of artillery, and six platoons of hussars, was accordingly as follows :

On the right wing, next to the high road, stood the Nógrád battalion, on its left and near it two guns ; then the first battalion of Pesth Volunteers : these divisions faced Schwechat. To the left, farther back than the first battalion of Pesth Volunteers, and forming a hook with it, stood the battalion of Honter Volunteers, with their front toward Zwölfaxing ; on its left and near it the Gömör National-guards ; then, again, two pieces of artillery. The cavalry was there only to protect the guns, on account of want of confidence in the foot-soldiers.

Pusztelnik had borrowed four of my guns, intending with them to betake himself to the continuation of the south-eastern outlet of Schwechat—far beyond the reach of my position—and by cannonading it, prevent the enemy, as far as possible, from debouching on that point. Not till the next day did I see these

guns again! But the enemy did debouch nevertheless, and took us by surprise with a fire of artillery truly murderous at so short a distance, and far surpassing that of my four guns.

By his first shots he at once threw my battalions into irremediable confusion. The Gömör National-guards ran away first. These were followed by the Honter Volunteers, after they had overturned their commander, horse and all, in his endeavors to stop them. Only with the greatest efforts did he succeed in working his way out of the agglomeration of the ranks, who, in their panic terror, were rushing headlong over one another. By my orders he hastened in advance of his fleeing battalion, to rally it, if possible, out of the reach of the enemy's batteries, and lead it forward again.

Meanwhile I hoped to hold the place with the first Pesth battalion, which I supposed to be still firm. But then I wished to attempt to storm the hostile battery. Had not my battalions times innumerable solemnly promised that they would follow me till death! Nevertheless, by anticipation, I gave up all hope of the return of the Gömör National-guards.

During the first minutes of the cannonade from the enemy, being exclusively occupied with the Honter Volunteers, I had not observed what was taking place in the first Pesth battalion. I now found it also already in confusion; and its commander, the National-guard major, Count Ernest Almásy, almost beside himself with exhaustion, in consequence of his strenuous efforts to keep his men together. I saw in an instant the impossibility of maintaining the position with this battalion until the return of the Honter Volunteers; and yet I madly believed it possible to animate it to storm the hostile batteries. "Forward! forward against the guns!" shouted I to the irresolute; and Captain Gózon of the battalion seized the banner, ran ahead with it some fifty paces toward the enemy, planted it in the ground, and cried in Hungarian, "Hither, Magyar! here waves thy banner!"

From thirty to forty of the most courageous followed the intrepid man. But while the foremost rank joined them only laggardly, those behind deserted more and more; and after a few minutes the battalion resembled a misshapen elongated reptile, for the greater number crawled away on all fours, while those who fled erect tumbled over them. In vain did Captain Gózon

again hold up the banner, wave it high in the air, and exhaust himself with inspiring shouts ; in vain did the commander of the battalion, with his adjutant, at last fall on the fugitives—they were no longer to be stopped ; and even those few who had advanced at Gózon's first call, quickly deserted him again one after the other ; and he soon stood there alone with the banner.

I rode up to him, gave him my hand as a mark of my esteem for his heroism, and recommended him to save the banner.

Saving my guns was of far more importance to me. Those of the left wing had already been dragged away by the battalions in their flight. Only those of the right wing remained.

With anxious solicitude I therefore hastened thither, and imperiously demanded of the commander of the battery, what he still wanted there by himself. He excused himself by saying that he had received no orders to retire.

“Now, then, make haste and be off!” I exclaimed ; quite overlooking, in my excitement, the stoical courage evinced by this excuse.

But the man had the blood of a fish in his veins. “There are still some charges here,” replied he, in a Bohemian-German dialect ; “may I not first fire them off?” I was almost ashamed of my anxiety before him. Irritated, I gave a bluff consent, and turned my horse toward the high road, to see what had happened meanwhile to my neighbour brigades.

I had supposed that the Nógrad Volunteer battalion to the right, in the rear of the guns, had run away long ago. My surprise, therefore, was indescribable, when my first glance in this direction fell on the serried and immovable mass.

It stood in the direction of the most violent fire of the hostile batteries, though in a gently-sloping hollow protected from it. This circumstance I overlooked, however, in the first instance, and thus believed that I had before me a battalion of heroes. “Advance swiftly to cover the retreat of the artillery, and then form the rear-guard!” I called, encouraged, to the commander, and thought I should still accomplish wonders with such heroes. What a deception ! Scarcely was the battalion out of its covert and exposed to the balls of the battery, when the commander shouted with all his might, “Volunteers, forward !—fire, all !”

But the volunteers remained immovable ; the whole mass discharged their high-presented muskets at the hussars, who, in pro-



tecting the retreating guns, were just passing close by their front (fortunately none of the shots hit); and the next minute the battalion of supposed heroes was already on its way to join the rest. One of its men alone disdained to take part in the general flight, and acted as if he would of himself form the rear-guard of my whole brigade.

Thus, out of nearly 5000 men of those National-guards and Volunteers about whose valor I had already heard so many tirades; who, as they themselves had repeatedly asserted, were burning with desire to measure themselves with an enemy whom they never mentioned but with the greatest contempt—there remained to me, after a short hostile cannonade, *a single man!* and this one was an elderly, half-invalid soldier!

The firmness with which at Nikelsdorf I had opposed the President's urging to the offensive, proved, I should think, clearly enough that I was perfectly prepared for an unfortunate *début* of these "inspired legions;" but what I had just experienced far exceeded my worst apprehensions.

I thought I should have sunk into the earth for shame at the unspeakable cowardice of my countrymen, and wished that a ball would strike me from my horse!

Of my once-numerous suite, only my younger brother and a first-lieutenant of the tenth regiment of hussars had constantly kept near me during moments of danger. Accompanied by them I sorrowfully left the field of battle—the witness of our shame—and had then no presentiment that the honor was yet reserved for us of taking part in future combats, the consequences of which would embitter to the victors of Schwechat the memory of this day.

Slowly I rode toward the midst of the centre. I almost feared the sight of my comrades, whom I supposed to be still engaged in the battle with their brigades. Alas, I had no reason for fear. The whole of our forces from Schwechat to Mannswörth was as if swept away. The other brigades were said—incredible as it seems—to have taken to their heels even before mine.

Like a scared flock, the main body of the army was seen hastening in the greatest disorder toward the Fischea for safety. The broad plain was literally sown all over with single fugitives; nowhere, as far as the eye could reach, was a compact division to be perceived.

It was to be expected that the enemy would take advantage of his victory, resolutely pursue, and render it impossible to get our train of artillery safely across the Fischa. This was confirmed by his advancing batteries.

Nothing else than a desperate combat by the rear-guard could now save the army. At whatever cost, something must be done to effect this. Fortunately the horses of my two companions were still pretty fresh. I therefore dispatched one of them in the direction of Schwaadorf, the other toward Fischamend, after the fugitives, to stop and assemble as many as they possibly could.

The result of their exertions was hopelessly small, about 1000 men in all, and even these were continually on the point of running away again. I no longer saw any hope of preservation.

But, next to God, the enemy was on this day merciful and compassionate to us, for—he did not pursue us.

Unmolested we reached before night the opposite bank of the Fischa; and equally unmolested on the next day we entered again the “legal ground” of our country.

Scarcely had the last sound of the artillery before Schwechat died away, when the strangest opinions were heard as to the real cause of the failure of our offensive operations.

For instance, the masses of deserters from the National-guards and Volunteers—who had at their command a surprising readiness for interpreting every defeat sustained through their cowardice as being the inevitable result of some treason—asserted that the inhabitants of Vienna, secretly leaguings with Prince Windischgrätz, had exhorted us to hasten to their assistance, and had during the battle united themselves with the hostile troops against us. Absurd as this story sounds, it was but a natural consequence of those agitations which had led to the expectation of a sally of the inhabitants of Vienna simultaneously with our attack, and thus of the easiest victory over the blockading army.

Móga's dispositions during the offensive, but especially during the conflict, were likewise severely criticised; and by many of his inferiors expressly interpreted as if he had wished to deliver the whole army into the enemy's hands. That this had not succeeded—they further said—was owing to Prince Windischgrätz, or rather to his sub-commanders, who purposely allowed us to escape with only a black eye.

But the civil coryphei of the Hungarian movement diffused

*these* opinions very diligently throughout the country ; on the one hand, to weaken the just reproach that they by their agitations for the crossing of the Lajtha had led the nation to take a foolhardy, pernicious step ; on the other hand, to revive the drooping courage of the people, by pointing to sympathies, which they said existed for the cause of Hungary *even in the Austrian army*.

A conscientious estimate of the peculiar circumstances under which the battle of Schwechat had been fought, scarcely permits, however, an unreserved concurrence in this somewhat bold judgment.

It can not certainly be denied, on the one side, that our general's dispositions here and there led to the suspicion that he intended to deliver his army into the enemy's hands. On the other side, it must be admitted, that the enemy had entirely confined the pursuit of our deserting centre and right wing to sending at random after us his projectiles from two, or, at most, three positions he had taken up for his artillery when advancing ; while his gigantic turning-column, opposed by our quite isolated, feeble left wing, under Répásy, discontinued its attacks just at the moment when it had become impossible for our general to reinforce the left wing. It must further be granted, that the enemy could have been hindered from pursuing neither by a sally of the inhabitants of Vienna, nor by the supposition that our flight was merely a feigned one. All this taken together consequently furnishes reason enough for the supposition, that he intentionally let us escape with only a black eye.

But I oppose to this, that it can not be imagined there was, either on the part of Móga or on that of his sub-commanders, a clear knowledge of what they really intended to do on the day of the battle of Schwechat. And I find the more natural explanation of the defective leading of our army, as well as of their unexpected preservation, partly in the embarrassment, easily conceivable after thirty years of peace, of the opposite leaders and their troops ; partly, perhaps, also in the circumstance that the national excitements of the year 1848 had not yet succeeded in so completely effacing from the ranks of the regular troops of both armies the remembrance of the fellowship which had existed among them shortly before, as that it would have been possible for them to fight against each other like embittered enemies.



## CHAPTER IX.

EARLY on the 31st of October, I had received, during the march, an order from the commander of the army not to lead my brigade again to Bruck, into the inevitable position on the Lajtha, but to Kitsee (Köpesény), and to encamp before that place.

Here, consequently, there reached me, in the night between the 31st of October and the 1st of November, 1848, the President's order to appear before him without delay at Presburg (Pozson). At the same time I was invited to the head-quarters (in the seignorial castle of Kitsee), Móga wishing to speak to me previously.

It was past midnight when I arrived at the head-quarters. I found Móga already retired to rest; but his adjutant was waiting for me, and communicated to me beforehand, that his chief, in consequence of a fall from his horse, by which he was severely bruised, had become incapable of continuing the command of the army, and had proposed *me* to the President as his successor.

I therefore rode immediately to Presburg; and very early in the morning of the 1st of November I stood beside the President's sick-bed; for, in the delicate state of his health, the recent events had brought on a kind of fever. A violent fit, he assured me, had just left him.

He invited me to take a seat near his bed, as our conversation might be of some duration, and complained first of the excessive cowardice of the National-guards and Volunteers, still more of the battalion of the foot-regiment Preussen, and especially of its commander, Major Gyözei,\* a coward beyond compare. This battalion, according to Kossuth, stood in the second line of the middle brigade of the centre (in the array before Schwechat my neighbor brigade to the right), and at the beginning of the hos-

\* This was his Magyarized name; his German name is unknown to me.

tile cannonade had taken to flight the first of all—nay, during the flight had thrown away even their havresacks and cartridge-pouches.

I remembered, indeed, to have noticed, during my last ride over the position occupied by our centre, in the direction indicated, a remarkably great mass of equipments, with white straps, that had been thrown away, and far around not any dead or wounded to be seen.

However, said Kossuth, the National-guards had afterward succeeded in disputing with this regular battalion the palm of greater cowardice. Because when he had left General Móga, after many vain attempts to put a stop to the flight which now had become general, and had hastened back in his carriage to Fischamend—as was natural, only with the intention of stopping the fugitives at the bridge of the Fischa—he found it already occupied to such a degree by deserters, that he could himself get over it only in consequence of the very energetic efforts made by his armed followers.

“And this was much,” added Kossuth, in an explanatory manner; “for I had not remained a great while after the commencement of the retreat, on that point behind the place where the reserve of the army stood—where, shortly before the hostile attack on our centre, we had for the last time spoken together in the general’s company—and had ridden pretty quickly from thence to Fischamend!

“I was now obliged,” continued Kossuth, “to defer the execution of my original design to a point lying still farther on. I ordered fresh horses to be put to my carriage, and availed myself of the time while this was being done, to address those who were fleeing close by my side, and so perhaps stop them. But, in vain. They only waved their hats in friendly salute, wishing me many times long life, and ran on unheeding.

“Though disgusted in the highest degree at such conduct, I could not but see the impossibility of damming up any where in the midst the stream of fugitives without the energetic co-operation of a compact troop; and this confirmed me still more in my resolution to overtake those who had fled farthest, before I should venture again to attempt rallying them.

“Meanwhile the fresh horses had been put to the carriage. I had no time to lose, and urged haste. But however broad the

main road might be, I was nevertheless every here and there again and again interrupted in my swift journey by a new dense multitude of fugitives.

“Behind almost each of these crowds I was obliged to make a formal speech from my carriage, to be allowed at least to drive on before them. And thus it happened that, in spite of the repeated change of horses, I could not overtake the first of the deserters before I was in front of Presburg, in the so-called Au. There at last, eight (German) miles from Schwechat—the fellows must clandestinely have taken to their heels at the earliest opportunity after the first discharge of artillery—the danger from the enemy appeared to them no longer sufficiently great to make them run farther. They were camping contentedly along the road, and were just taking some refreshment when I arrived among them. Beside myself with indignation, I resolved to sentence them to the severest punishments; and for this purpose asked the name of the division to which they belonged. But the wretches felt themselves even flattered by my ‘kind inquiry;’ and while some of them repeatedly called to me with self-satisfaction that they were the National-guards of the comitate of Komorn, the rest bellowed continually, ‘Eljen Kossuth!’”

When the President in the council of war at Nikelsdorf—evidently offended at my unreserved description of the state of discipline existing in our army—had put the question to me, with a malicious sneer, whether I seriously feared that we should not bring home a single man from the offensive across the Lajtha, I answered, “I was not alarmed about the National-guards and Volunteers—they had nimble legs!” I could not now feel otherwise than astonished to see how perfectly the President’s own experience justified my then doubted judgment. Still I refrained at this time from making any remark upon it; because Kossuth appeared to me not only physically but also morally shattered.

However, he was not the latter by any means. Although, after his recent journey from Fischamend to Presburg, he could no longer answer so decidedly for the heroism of the National-guards and Volunteers as he had previously done, nevertheless he still attributed the chief blame of the disgraceful issue of our offensive in favor of Vienna to the indecision of the commander of the army; and strenuously maintained that a more determined leading of the troops would have been followed by victory.



"The accident which has made Mógica suddenly incapable of service," added Kossuth, "I consider as a hint to remove forever from the command of the army all politically-wavering elements. This seems to me especially necessary at the moment when it is important to prepare for the royal imperial Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich—who has meanwhile already hostilely penetrated into the country from the north as far as Tyrnau (Nagy Szombat)—the fate of Generals Roth and Philippovich, and thereby simultaneously to destroy on the one hand a not inconsiderable part of the hostile forces, and on the other to rekindle anew the enthusiasm of the country, depressed in consequence of the disaster at Schwechat—and thus, as it were, kill two birds with one stone.

"I have therefore advanced Count Guyon from major to colonel of the National-guards, and made him commander of the expedition against Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich. His heroic conduct before Mannswörth is a guarantee to me that this expedition will at least not fail from its leader's want of decision. It might indeed more easily miscarry through his unskillfulness; for I distrust the military knowledge of Guyon. To obviate this, I have placed by his side as counsellor the chief of Mógica's general staff, the Honvéd colonel Kollmann. But then, according to our system, Kollmann, as Honvéd colonel, and still more as his senior in rank, is properly Guyon's superior; and he must consequently first of all be won, as he best may, to a voluntary subordination to the commands of the latter. For this, however, and especially the more to expedite the preparations for this expedition, in which the most trusty troops of the army shall be employed, I need the vigorous assistance of an energetic commander of the army. Would not *you* undertake the command of the army? *You* seem to me to be above all others the right man for this post!"

"What, then, will my senior comrades in the army say, when they see themselves passed over, on my account, and without reason?" replied I, interrogatively.

"I have thought of that," answered Kossuth, "and had already offered to several of them the staff of command, as soon as I knew of Mógica's accident; but have received just as many answers declining to accept it. Hereupon *you* were proposed to me for this post by Mógica. As to what your comrades will say

to it, you may therefore, I think, be perfectly easy. They will be nominated generals together with you, only you receive the seniority of rank. If therefore you accept the staff of command, endeavor above all to set on foot as quickly as possible the expedition against Field-marshal Simunich, and to arrange any differences between Kollmann and Guyon, if such should arise, before they personally fall out, and thus render mediation impossible."

"I accept the staff of command," I answered, "and will immediately go in search of those gentlemen; but I must remark, that I despair beforehand of any favorable result from my mediation. Why do you not prefer to entrust Kollmann with the command of the expedition, and associate Guyon with him as sub-commander?"

"Because before Schwechat I had an opportunity of having confirmed by my own observation the ambiguous reputation which Kollmann has with the army," replied Kossuth. "You should but have seen the pitiful countenance with which he was stealing about before Schwechat among the commander's suite, and how it at once became irradiated with joy, when, after the beginning of the general flight in the centre, his leader turned his horse toward the preserving Fischa. I can not tell, however, how much of this delight is to be attributed to the tranquillising thought that he (Kollmann) in the general's suite could now honorably withdraw himself from the approaching danger, and how much to malignant satisfaction at the baffled *début* of his substitute Pusztelnik. This much, however, appears to me to be certain, that Kollmann is destitute of those moral qualities which, to ensure its success, I presume to be indispensable in the leader of the expedition against Simunich.

"Moreover I have already definitively charged Guyon with the command of this expedition. If Kollmann, therefore, should persevere in refusing to recognize the former as his chief, then Pusztelnik must again act in Kollmann's place."

Agreeing with this measure, I left the President, and made a vain attempt to arrange the wished-for understanding between Kollmann and Guyon, conformably with Kossuth's intention. In the meanwhile, however, they had already had words; and Kollmann steadily refused to lead the expedition under Guyon's command. Pusztelnik was consequently associated with the

latter as chief of the general staff. Part of the troops for this campaign left Presburg before daybreak, and all of them in the course of the 1st of November. The rest of the army, in the mean time, was distributed, for the protection of the frontier, on the right bank of the Danube from the Neusiedel lake to Presburg; on the left from Presburg to Hochstetten.

Kossuth awaited the issue of the expedition in Presburg, whither also my head-quarters were transferred.

A few days after the commencement of the expedition I received an invitation from the President to a *rendezvous* with the Polish general Bem, who had just arrived at Presburg from Vienna, and was immediately to start for Guyon's expeditionary corps, to give a new and favorable turn to the operations of the latter, which were already near becoming a failure.

In consequence of this invitation I saw Bem for the first time, without knowing more of his former fortunes than his sudden appearance in Vienna in the course of the past month of October, and his participation in the defense of that city.

Our conversation was very short. He communicated to me that Kossuth was sending him to Guyon to assist him both with his advice and co-operation.

Some days after this, Bem had again come back to Presburg; and, as Kossuth had already set out for Pesth, he invited me, through Csányi, to a conference. This time it lasted somewhat longer. Bem told me that he had reached Guyon a day too late to be able to exercise any effective influence on the course of this unfortunate campaign. He then remarked, what distinguished talents Guyon possessed as a general; but that the officers of the regular troops were still not quite uniform in their obedience; and so on. Finally he declared that he should go to Kossuth at Pesth, that he might be employed somewhere in the field.

Bem's presence produced a depressing effect upon me. I knew neither whence he came, nor what were his aims. His emerging in Vienna, which has remained inexplicable to me; his doings there, which I knew only by report; and now suddenly the devotedness, just as inexplicable, which he constantly protested for the defense of my country—these circumstances led me involuntarily to suppose him to be something of a "knight errant" in a modern revolutionary style of warfare. My coun-



try's cause appeared to me to be too sacred, too just, not to make me feel a decided aversion to the companionship in arms of such elements. Moreover Bem's favorable judgment with respect to Guyon, as well as the contrary in regard to the body of officers of the regular troops, so diametrically contradicted my own experience, that I found therein very little reason to expect for my country any enduring success from Bem's doings in the field of battle.

Except on these two occasions at Presburg, I have never seen Bem, nor have I had any other direct intercourse with him.

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## CHAPTER X.

THE Constitution of Hungary was worth a sanguinary contest. The nation had acknowledged this, and had unanimously risen to the conflict. Their leader was the man of their confidence—Kossuth.

But being no soldier himself, he under-estimated the importance of the soldier, and believed that the thunder of the enemy's artillery would be silenced by the mere war-cry of masses of people brought together by extemporised declamations.

Soldiers—myself among the number—had warned him against such a dangerous self-deception. The warning was unheeded by him; and before Schwechat he paid dearly for his experience.

Then he offered *me* the command of the defeated army.

I hailed this step as a proof that Kossuth had forever sacrificed to the welfare of the country his anti-military enthusiasm, and accepted this important post with the clear conviction that the combat of the nation for its rights was a combat in self-defense, and in the firm belief that it would remain so: I accepted it, because I felt inwardly the vocation for it, and that by refusing it, I should have violated my duty to my country; finally, because the higher I stood, the more likely it seemed to me that I should be able to inspire my fellow citizens, by my own exam-

ple, with that devotion to the just cause of the fatherland, without which it was vain to think of saving it.

But even during the first days of my new sphere of action I found that the day of Schwechat had neither cured the civil rulers of the error of allowing, in the disposal of the armed forces, political considerations to prevail at the expense of strategic ones, nor had it deterred them from the repetition of the experiment of making war without soldiers.

My proposition was—on the right bank of the Danube to move back with the main army to Raab, with the advanced corps to Wieselburg (Moson); on the left, to protect Presburg and defend the principal passages across the White Mountains (Fehér Hegyek) with strong isolated detachments only, which, in case of the advance of a superior force of the enemy should effect their retreat, on the one side to Leopoldstadt (Lipótván), on the other to Komorn (Komárom): further, to reorganize the active army, to transfer the seat of government, and of the Diet, together with the *cadres* of the battalions about to be raised, behind the Theiss; and to make use of the end of autumn for raising troops, for establishing magazines and dépôts, and in general for the organization of a trusty, well-regulated army. It was, however, rejected.

In opposition to this, it was said that *the frontier must remain occupied*, and the reorganization of the army be carried on in face of the enemy; because that with every hand-breadth of country lost, there was also a falling away from us of a part of the people. Their sympathies for the maintenance of the Constitution were not yet sufficiently well-grounded to be able to resist the discomfiture sustained in a combat remarkably unfortunate for us. Above all, the discouraging effect of the defeat at Schwechat must be mitigated as much as possible by the maintenance of the frontier. Then would the inhabitants, especially those of that part of Hungary which is situated next to the seat of the Austrian government, accustom themselves in a very short time to the absence of their former relation to Austria, being obliged, in consequence of the blockade of the frontier, to break off their commercial connections with the non-Hungarian territories of Austria, to confine their mercantile activity to the interior, and thus mark the more abruptly the frontier of Hungary toward Austria. Moreover, by means of the hermetical

blockade of the frontier; the exportation of provisions to the capital—to the detriment of the hostile army concentrated in and around it—would also be entirely prevented; the buying-up of the supplies of corn and hay stored in the frontier comitates, and amassing them in the fortress of Komorn and its environs, would be secured, as well as a favorable market for the new Hungarian paper-money.

In vain did I call attention to the fact, that in spite of all this, by the occupation of the frontier, they were merely striving for transitory and secondary advantages, and abandoning for these the durable and most important benefit which the possession of a well-organized armed force would secure to us; while the reorganization of the army, during the harassing service of the outposts along such an extended line of frontier, would be rendered very difficult, nay almost impossible.

I was outvoted, and might consider it fortunate that at least no objection was made to the reorganizing of the army, by which I understood nothing less than the disbanding of the battalions of National-guards and Volunteers, and the formation of regular Honvéd battalions out of the material thereby gained.

But scarcely had Kossuth left Presburg to return to Pesth, when my exertions in this direction also began to be most obstinately obstructed.

Even during the President's sojourn of some days at Presburg, I had frequently had occasion to perceive that he was opposed to my purely military plans, not perhaps from his own personal conviction, but only in consequence of the most prejudicial influence of those about him, who had not been very happily chosen for the furtherance of the good cause. The difficulties which he suddenly raised from Pesth against the reorganization of the army as I had proposed it, although he had seemed perfectly to agree with it when in Presburg, plainly confirmed this supposition. The source of these difficulties, again, could be found, in my opinion, only in external influences, and very probably in those of the members of the Committee of Defense. Though I scarcely knew them by name, it was nevertheless sufficient to know that they likewise were not soldiers, and that the power of the leaders of the army had always been a thorn in the side of the civil power.

But by this miserable petty jealousy the salvation of the coun-



try might be wrecked, notwithstanding the most heroic perseverance in fight on the part of the nation. All, consequently, depended on creating a supreme power in the state, which being unrestricted, would consequently be raised above all such jealousy.

But this power must be vested in *one* person ; it could only be the dictatorship. The one and only possible dictator of Hungary at that time was Kossuth.

Though not quite adapted for it, being ignorant of war, and disinclined to the measure of maintaining a standing army, which, however, is indispensable in the modern system of warfare ; he nevertheless appeared to me to be much less obstructive to the successful progress of our cause than a governing *collegium*, like the Committee of Defense, in its nature practically irresponsible, and to whose proceedings the proverb of too many cooks was very often strikingly applicable.

As dictator—thus I reasoned—Kossuth would have to choose his residence with the principal army of the country, therefore with the army of the upper Danube. If once for a longer time in his direct proximity, I hoped soon to gain him over to my conviction, that the salvation of the country was not possible otherwise than with the assistance of a well-disciplined armed force, consequently neither with National-guards nor with Volunteer corps. And if theory had not been sufficient for this purpose, new practical experiences *à la* Schwechat would do the rest in a very short time.

Once cured of his illusion on this point, Kossuth would probably also have soon duly subordinated the political motives for the employment of the armed forces to the strategic considerations.

From these remarks the occasion is evident of the following letter to the Committee of Defense, in this instance written in German :

“ PRESBURG, 11th November, 1848.

“ On the 31st of October, in the present year, I was invited by the President to take the command of the Hungarian army of the upper Danube.

“ I undertook it—and with it the obligation to do whatever might contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the salvation of our oppressed country.

“The history of all nations, which, though at one time near is great, is very great, and unfortunately may become still greater.

“No true patriot ought to conceal from himself, that the danger their ruin, have elevated themselves again to that stage of existence which includes the condition of a permanent endurance, teaches us that there are moments when all lesser considerations must give way, if the whole is to be saved; teaches us further, that without unity of will preservation is impossible; teaches us finally, that this unity can be obtained only when the confidence of the whole nation, or at all events of a preponderating part of it, concentrates itself in *one* man, and when the nation, placing this one freely over themselves for a certain time, voluntarily does homage to his will. So has it hitherto been, and so will it continue to be. I do not believe that the course of the world will take another direction out of love to Hungary.

“Whether all Hungary already stands so near the brink of ruin, that the hand of a firm dictatorship can alone save it from destruction,—this may be judged of by those men who have considered it adapted to the times to place the greatest part of the Hungarian army under the orders of a mere private individual. But that this part of the army has been brought by recent events very near to total dissolution, is a fact which no military man by profession can deny.

“To find out with whom the blame of this rests, must be postponed to a time when the mental excitement, which just now seems to be ever on the increase, shall have subsided, and given place to a calm, comprehensively just, nay considerate judgment of all the circumstances. But at present there must be speedy help.”

(The original contains here, by way of parenthesis, an attack against the then predominating mania for indulging in suspicions. What follows connects naturally word for word with the preceding.)

“My business is to propound *how*; and I therefore declare my convictions as follow:

“1. All nepotism in the promotions must for ever entirely cease.

“2. All irregular bodies of troops must be strictly kept apart from the regular, and placed under their own separate commanders.

"The best plan would be, to disband immediately all irregular troops; to pre-engage separately those individuals among them who are bound to military service, and to employ them for completing the bodies of regular troops already existing.

"The rebaptising of the so-called Volunteer battalions to Honvéd battalions is a very unhappy experiment. The name is changed, but the child remains the same.

"The Volunteer battalions are worth little or nothing, because only a very small number of the officers and subalterns understand their duty. Can we promise to ourselves more from these appointments, when they are called Honvéd instead of National-guards? The greater number remains notwithstanding *asinus in pelle leonina*.

"Some have advanced the opinion, that one battalion of Volunteers or National-guards placed between two Honvéd battalions is equivalent to a third Honvéd battalion. So long as it does not come to bread-breaking,\* this may be so; but at the first grape-shot the Volunteer battalion runs voluntarily away, and as a rule carries off with it involuntarily both Honvéd battalions to its right and left. There have been exceptions, but how many?

"The officers of the Volunteers, if they wish to pass over into the ranks of the Honvéd, ought previously to undergo an examination before a commission composed of tried, skillful officers; and if this examination proves satisfactory, they should be transferred, but only as juniors in rank. A few exceptions, the reward of distinguished merit, might be made, according to the decision of the commander-in-chief of the army alone. Moreover,

"3. The promotion of officers within certain limits ought to be confided to the commander of the army alone. Either the commander of the army deserves this confidence, and then there is no risk run; or he does not deserve it, and then away with him! Only, no half-measures!

"4. The commander of the army is made responsible for all the dispositions of troops; but then nobody except himself ought to dispose of his army.

"An army without unity in the command is like a man who has fallen out with himself; neither from the one nor the other can any thing decided be expected.

\* *i.e.* while there is no danger.—*Transl.*



"5. The army needs rest and refreshment ; for it is depressed physically and morally. Rest and refreshment it can not find here in Presburg ;—Presburg, on account of the overpowering forces of the enemy menacing simultaneously from Austria, Moravia, Silesia, and Gallicia, is an untenable position, and will soon become the grave of our army.

"6. All the Volunteer battalions are covered with vermin, because since Jellachich's entrance into Stuhlweissenburg, where they lost their stock of body-linen, they have only *one* set a-piece. If they wish to wash it, they must wear their cloak all day long on their naked body. In the field this might do ; but here, in these close quarters, the pedicular disease has got the upper hand to such an extent, that there are individuals whose skin is already quite ulcerated. At least one set of body-linen for change per man, and more suitable quarters, together with rest, are the only means of remedying this disgusting and dangerous malady.

"Fresh linen may be sent us, but not better quarters and rest.

"The constant watchfulness requisite to secure an extended open city like Presburg from hostile surprises, is too great to leave to the troops the resting-time needful for their absolutely essential purification and refreshment. On the other hand, Presburg does not afford sufficient space for quartering to enable the troops required for its security to be lodged in such a manner as their preservation urgently demands.

"7. All the divisions of the National-guards which did not engage themselves for the duration of the war must be immediately disbanded ; because while this real public scourge costs immense sums, on account of the enormous compensation which was secured to it by the comitates for the period of its services, it seems to exist only for the purpose of scoffing at the laws, and pestiferously infecting our best-disciplined troops with the bad spirit by which it is itself pervaded. Therefore away with it ! Better no army at all, than one in whose separate parts the laws are scoffed at in the most scandalous manner.

"The Œdenburg National-guards 'on foot,' at the mere news that the enemy was approaching, immediately deserted to their homes ; those 'on horseback' did the same a few hours later. All that remained of them was the commander and some officers !

"At the request of the President Kossuth, I have taken the

command of a part of the Hungarian army, and it is my most sacred duty to see that its honor is preserved unsullied.

"A whole army may be beaten, and forced to yield, without injury to its honor; but if a single division of it plays the coward and runs away without having even seen the enemy, the honor of the whole army is stigmatized.

"I expect, from the ever-lauded equity of the honorable Committee of Defense, that I shall not be expected again to hazard the honor of my brave army by receiving into its ranks divisions which deserved rather the disgraceful name of 'Mob of run-aways,' than the honorable one of 'Defenders of the fatherland.'

"8. From points (5.) and (6.) the proposition naturally follows: to occupy Presburg only so far as is absolutely necessary with a part of the army; and to remove the head-quarters and the main body to some other place which offers greater advantages as well for the defense of the country as for the reorganization of the army.

"This proposition I shall have the honor of laying before you in my next letter." (My signature follows.)

This letter had as its consequence just the contrary of what I intended; for now Kossuth, together with the Committee of Defense and the War-ministry, opposed more decidedly than before all my propositions and measures tending to the consolidation of the army.

The following extracts from the rough draughts of several letters sent from Presburg to Kossuth in Pesth, being accidentally at hand, furnish evidence of this. The originals are drawn up in Hungarian. I give the passages quoted from the German translation.

"PRESBURG, 15th November, 1848.

"HONORED PRESIDENT,

.....

"According to the purport of a decree of the Committee of Defense, the individuals qualified for filling the positions of staff-officers are to be proposed by the commander of the army and the royal commissary; but those fitted for becoming subalterns by the regiments or battalions and the royal commissary.

"This decree, indeed, deprives me of the right of appointing

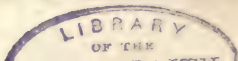
officers up to the rank of captain, and of the sole right of proposing those from captain upward, which had been confided to me by you, honored President. But this is not what troubles me most : it is rather my experience that even this more recent decree is not inviolably observed, as I have perceived from the promotion of Major Száz to the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

“ Major Száz decamped somewhat nimbly from Mannswörth, leaving to its fate a division of his battalion which was placed next to the enemy. This is a fact ; and it is in my opinion—without wishing to dictate—reason enough for *not* proposing him for promotion. My good Major Száz, however, has not fallen on his head : he is suddenly taken ill, needs the Kaiser-bath at Ofen, sets out immediately thither, and, look you, now he is already lieutenant-colonel !

“ In the nomination of officers and in promotions there reigns, generally speaking, frightful abuse. To-day, for instance, I read in *Közlöny*\*—I must confess with surprise—the promotion of my younger brother to the rank of captain. He had already been made Honvéd first-lieutenant without either myself or him knowing how this could have happened ; for I had promoted him only to a lieutenancy in the National-guards, and at the same time appointed him my adjutant (because I could make the best use of him in the organization of the Volunteer mobile National-guard) ; but had firmly resolved to take no such further step for him as could even in the remotest degree have the appearance of favoritism. I do not know consequently whom my brother has to thank for these favors. But thus much I know, that both of his promotions are just as irregular as innumerable others ; and I am much inclined to suspect that his latter advancement especially is nothing else than a deep-laid scheme to frustrate my exertions for the abolition of nepotism. But this does not at all divert me from my purpose.” . . . .

“ The sergeant-majors of hussars, V. and H., who have been promoted to the rank of lieutenants, I pray to have removed to another regiment, because these are the persons who, when in Galicia—for the purpose of enabling themselves to return with their men to Hungary—carried along with them their superior officer, whom they bound ; and thus committed the greatest military crime, though from patriotic motives. The country

\* The official gazette of the Committee of Defense.





rewards their zealous patriotism by promotion ; but the service strictly requires that they be removed from the ranks of that body of troops, where they serve only as dangerous examples of rewarded disobedience." &c. &c. &c.

"The period of service of the battalion of the Borsod National-guards expires on the 20th of this month ; and already on the 10th have these people demanded to return home. The royal commissary Csányi has attempted to induce them to remain longer on duty. But they have repeatedly declared, that they will positively not continue any longer ; for they are not such fools as to expose again their dear lives in the last five days of their service, after the good God has preserved them hitherto from the fire of the enemy's guns.

"I have consequently not the least reason to lament the departure of these zealous patriots ; but certainly cause enough to complain of the loss of so many good muskets and equipments. I have therefore desired the royal commissary at least to retain their arms for the defense of the country, though he dismiss the men. If this succeeds, we shall have gained more than we shall lose ; for the fifteenth Honvéd battalion, which loiters about in Presburg without arms, can then be immediately supplied with the muskets of these Borsoders." . . . . (My signature follows.)

"PRESBURG, 17th November, 1848.

"HONORED PRESIDENT,

"When I spoke earnestly against the formation of volunteer battalions, and the employment of the scythe-bearers in the field, I was not listened to by you, honored President, because, according to your views, enthusiasm of itself is sufficient to stand in the stead of order, perseverance in sustaining the toils and hardships of war, obedience, discipline, and more of the like military and *only* military virtues. Would God it were so ! matters would then be quite different with us. But, alas, Hungarian enthusiasm seems to be only a straw fire.

"I have already reported the conduct of the Borsod National-guard.

"The day before yesterday, the Honter Volunteer battalion, intended to be employed against the enemy, arrived without arms on the muster-ground. The men declared at the same

time that they had been sent by their comitate only for a service of from six to eight, or at most of ten weeks' duration, and that this time had expired long ago. Consequently they would not move another step against the enemy.

"The accompanying report of the commander of the battalion, with its documents, gives a more particular explanation of this occurrence, as well as of the deceptive means which had been employed by the local authorities of the comitate of Honter in enlisting the volunteers.

"The men of the battalion of Zemplin National-guards (engaged for six months) are also in a state of excitement, because they likewise have been deceived by their comitate, inasmuch as it has not sent them the necessary articles of clothing. And in the cold November nights a man is frozen if his cloak is the only cloth garment which he has as a protection against the cold. To-day two Zemplin National-guards appeared before me, in the name of the whole battalion, with the request that I would permit them to return to their homes, because the cholera was ravaging their comitate in a dreadful manner.

"This morning I expect similar requests from all the Volunteer battalions.

"To those of the Zemplin comitate I have answered, that I would lay their request before the Committee of Defense; but that until the arrival of a decision in their favor, they must perform their duties, otherwise I should be obliged to punish most severely those who were refractory.

"The period of service of four-sevenths of the Gömör National-guards also expires about this time. These most certainly do not remain!

"The metamorphosing the Volunteer into Honvéd battalions does not succeed well. Only very few of the men can be pre-engaged. Thus it is chiefly the officers who are favorable to this metamorphosis; so that, notwithstanding their ignorance and uselessness, they may for a still longer period receive their large pay, and continue to play their pranks in the capacity of officers.

"They agitate against the examination of officers, instead of acquiring some solid knowledge. One of the most zealous among these agitators is a captain of the National-guards, Sigismund Thaly, of the Eszterházy battalion, whose company will be dis-

missed to-morrow, their time of service having expired. On this occasion dismissal likewise awaits him, unless he shall previously undergo the examination. He now suddenly demands a fortnight's furlough. I see through his plan. He wants a certificate of leave of absence, to prove in Pesth that he is still really in the service; supported by it, he would certainly find ways and means to be transferred into one or other of the Honvéd battalions. This calculation of the captain of the National-guards, Sigismund Thaly, is a pretty little scheme, and perhaps not entirely without prospect of success, because several cases have already shown, that to be promoted one need only go to Pesth.

"Of the said Eszterházy battalion three companies will set out the day after to-morrow for their native fields (*i. e.* two more besides the company of Captain Sigismund Thaly). To detain them here any longer is an impossibility; but I will at least make them leave their arms behind them.

"Your army is already weak, and yet you weaken it still further!" might be said of my not forcibly detaining the home-sick. I know this well, but still can not do otherwise; and the less so, as I have a settled conviction that though my small army, by such departures 'as these, will certainly be weakened in numbers, it will nevertheless be morally strengthened; for in war there is nothing more disheartening to the soldier than the apprehension of being left in the lurch by his comrade.

"I have so disposed of my forces as to keep the enemy in check from Ödenburg as far as Nádas. I must, however, confess that, despite all one's energy, with troops insufficiently protected against even the frosts of autumn, this is not only difficult to accomplish, but also exposes the army itself to very great danger. The brigade at Nádas, in particular, appears to me to be a second Leonidas troop, not so much on account of the overpowering forces of the enemy, as from their endurance of the hardships incident to their circumstances of time and place, their disproportionately arduous service, and their want of clothing.

"A few days since the cholera also began to insinuate itself into the army, and this to such a degree, that out of twenty-nine who fell sick, eleven died. But all this can not be otherwise, because, according to your opinion, my task is, with a corps of scarcely 20,000 men (of whom two-thirds are good-for-nothing volunteers), to defend at the same time the north of Hungary, the city of



Presburg, and moreover the comitates of Wieselburg and Edenburg." . . . . .

"The Committee of Defense has not yet authorized me to employ the troops according to my own discretion.

"Probably my opinions are rather too radical, in maintaining that it can by no means be decided in Pesth, whether the so-called 'pass' of Nádas (across the White Mountains) can be defended with block-houses or not. It seems as if in Pesth a different opinion prevailed on this subject, as well as about promotions." . . . . .

"I take the liberty, honored President, of again calling your attention to some illegal promotions.

"The comrades of a certain Mérei, subaltern officer in the first Honvéd battalion, intended to expel him, because he had suddenly pretended to be ill in the camp at Parendorf immediately before the offensive over the Lajtha. He repairs to Pesth, and, look you, becomes captain in the eighteenth Honvéd battalion! Soon afterward a sub-lieutenant of the first Honvéd battalion is appointed first lieutenant in the eighteenth battalion, but declares, on finding Mérei there, that he can not accept the promotion. Now the body of officers of this battalion will enter a protest against Mérei's being associated with them.

"Béldi, formerly a sub-officer in the hussars, had stolen something from one of his superiors, was punished for it by running the gauntlet ten times, and being dismissed; but notwithstanding this he is now an officer in a Honvéd battalion." . . . . .

(My signature follows.)

In spite of the assurance of victory which characterized the proceedings of the then civil rulers of Hungary, and declared itself plainly enough by their persevering in the idea—to say the least of it, very naïve in the eyes of a soldier—of fighting the battle of liberty with Volunteers and National-guards; Kossuth was nevertheless one day suddenly overtaken with anxiety, lest the enemy should concentrate his forces, which were considerably superior to ours, upon a point beyond the Lajtha—if not unobserved, yet unhindered by us—and then at once somewhere break into the country, without our being able to stop him. Associated with this anxiety was also the apprehension of the possible ex-

tinction of the sympathies of the people for our cause, notwithstanding our occupation of the frontier.

Both fears caused Kossuth urgently to request that I would not always stand so inactive on the frontiers, but rather open a regular war of partisans\* against Austria; surprise the enemy with the rapidity of lightning, at one time here, and immediately afterward in another place, then in a third, and so on—God knows where else—and thereby prevent him from concentrating his forces on a fixed point, or at least induce him to think they were every moment necessary somewhere else, and even to attempt to realize it: thus he would fatigue and dispirit his troops; and render them unfit for the execution of the offensive dreaded by Kossuth.

In such a warfare Kossuth saw at the same time a rich source of warlike heroic adventures, which, duly diffused by the daily press, would serve to counteract the apprehended extinction of the sympathies of the people for our struggle.

These requirements of the President—occasioned at first by an order of the enemy to his army, which led us to expect a speedy irruption into Hungary, and of which Kossuth had subjoined a copy to his letter to me—caused me to answer him *verbatim* as follow:

“The order of the enemy to his army, which you have communicated to me, informs me that it is in fact no longer in my power to prevent his concentration; because it has already been most conveniently effected on the other side the Lajtha, and he can advance across our frontier almost in parade-march—for instance, at Kittsee (Köpcsény), where neither bridges nor defiles interrupt his great undertakings.

“Do not take this remark for pusillanimity. If there be one who does not despair of the cause of our country, *I am the man!* But let us not deceive ourselves in relation to the greatness of the danger, of which I recognize the factors more in the feeble patriotism of our countrymen than in the numerical superiority of the enemy. The comitates of Presburg, Neutra, Trencsin, Wieselburg, and Edenburg, are so many hothouses, if not of open antipathy against us, at least of the most pitiable inaction.

“The so-called ‘guerrilla warfare’ would certainly find in me

\* Kossuth erroneously called this mode of warfare “guerrilla combats;” and entering into his idea, I have retained this appellation in my letter of reply to him.

its most zealous champion. In our present condition, however, such a war is impossible. Impossible, because the rural population does not stand by us, but shuts its doors against its starving countrymen. Impossible is such a war, because our infantry are almost barefooted, and our cavalry, on their enfeebled horses, are scarcely able any longer to stagger after the infantry; and then the teams of the artillery! But the saddest matter of all is, that we have no hope of soon bringing our horses again into good condition; for the hay is bad, and the oats are likewise none of the best! Impossible is a war of that kind, because scarcely a battalion can march even the distance of one station without dragging after it a long train of wagons: now the most essential requisite for the so-named 'guerilla divisions' is facility of motion. For so-called surprises, which are made only at short distances, the enemy is too far off." . . . . .

(In the same letter I throw light circumstantially on our precarious situation in the position which has been taken up on the frontier as follows:)

"In my opinion, Presburg can be defended, unless the garrison is to be sacrificed, only so long as there remains in our possession, on one side Nádas, on the other Parendorf, Gattendorf, and Kittsee.

"The brigade at Nádas will maintain itself until the enemy menaces it by a wide circuit in its rear; or forces a passage on the spot; or, finally (if neither of these cases should happen), so long as Presburg is not abandoned by us, which must inevitably take place (the opening of the hostile offensive with an isolated attack on Presburg being presupposed),\* so soon as the enemy shall have succeeded in taking the first of the redoubts; partly because I should no longer be able to depend upon our still young soldiers, partly because the redoubts further back are altogether insufficient, from their construction, for defense.

"With Presburg the northwestern comitates certainly fall likewise: however, all in vain! With my small army, I must by no means engage in any war on the frontier; for this would be to abandon it in detail, and with it at the same time our country. This is my conviction! ~~no. edit. before~~

"I am very sorry, honored President, that this conviction of mine is diametrically opposed to what you anticipate from the

\* The sentences in parentheses are not in the original rough-draft; they are inserted only for the easier understanding of the passages cited.



‘guerrilla war.’ With what hearty good-will would I accede to the carrying out of all your projects, were it in any way possible under the existing local circumstances !

“The defile of Nádas is said to be a pass which might be rendered impracticable with little labor. For the last six days, under the protection of a strong brigade, considerable forces have been working at it ; and the whole result obtained is, that if this point be left by us to-day, the enemy will restore the road in two days’ time. And soon this point *must* be quitted, because the men can not endure the fatigue much longer. One-third of the brigade is unfit for service from the want of foot-gear ; 500 men are already ill. Half of those who can do duty are constantly at the outposts, day and night, under the open sky, and not even the Honvéd soldiers have cloth garments. . . . .”

(My signature follows.)

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## CHAPTER XI.

IF we take into account the numerous controversies between the Committee of Defense and myself, which prevailed during the first period of my chief command of the army, as well as the categorical language in which I asserted my convictions ; and if it be considered how easy it was to foresee that but a single step separated such language from action ;—the question comes prominently forward : what could have induced the revolutionary rulers of the civil power in Hungary to refrain from removing me even at that time from the chief command of the national army ?

The answer to this question may perhaps be found in the circumstance, that the more skillful and experienced military men constantly refused to accept the chief command ; while those who were eager for it possessed the confidence of the government even less than myself.

The royal commissary Csányi—who was present with the army, and who, having formerly been a soldier, generally coincided in my views—by the firmness with which he exerted his

weighty influence with the government in my favor, may also have essentially contributed to my retaining the chief command of the army.

Another question will be : what was it that prevented me, in spite of the controversies just mentioned, from resigning the chief command ?

The answer to this question is plainly and simply to be found in the motives which had determined me to accept the command at all.

The obstacles already presented by the head, body, and tail of the Committee of Defense to my endeavors, which were the result of my clear conviction of what Hungary needed, were not sufficient to discourage me. But at that time I had no presentiment whatever of the existence of those political tendencies, which, to my great surprise, Kossuth disclosed to me five months later. (It seems even problematical whether Kossuth himself had then the slightest idea of what five months afterward appeared to him to be so indispensably necessary for the salvation of the country.)

My political penetration extended no farther at that time than to the perception of those intentions which, hostile to the Constitution of my country, were entertained on the other side the Lajtha. And these intentions had protruded so far out of their effete constitutional mask, that they could easily be discovered even by that part of the nation from whose hands the hard swelling caused by their recent toils had scarcely disappeared.

But the circumstance, that this very part of the nation, in spite of all this, did not recognize these intentions, and even after it had recognized them, still continued to be averse to contend for the preservation of the benefits which had been conferred on it while it was in a dream ;—this, I say, was only a most afflicting proof of the pernicious influence produced by its hitherto depressed position on the moral and spiritual development of by far the greater number of my countrymen. Yet this very circumstance justified in my eyes the combat, even though its success should be confined for the present merely to rendering impossible the re-establishment of their former dependent condition.

Even in this case—the most unfavorable that could occur—the combat had, however, a still higher import.

To metamorphose Hungary into a conquered province of

Austria—an object toward which, with uninterrupted constancy Vienna had been directing all her endeavors for three centuries—seemed now to be also the main purpose of the great armament beyond the Lajtha. It had now been decided that Hungary, as a state, should at last expiate by its utter destruction the manifold annoyances which its former constitution—commendable only in default of a better—had caused to the divers *fathers* of the country, and to their household and public servants. This destruction, with regret be it spoken, had already been partly prepared during several years by the national arrogance of the original Magyars. Now it was that those on the other side the Lajtha almost believed they had but to strike the finishing blow.

*The nation owed it to its honor not to await this blow in slavish humility, perhaps even on its knees and with bended neck.*

I seemed to have been destined to be one of its last leaders; and though nothing less than a national enthusiast, yet the grandeur of the situation filled me to such a degree with the idea of identifying my personal honor as a free man with that of the nation, that it soon became my leading sentiment.

It was this idea especially which often made the employment of extremely strict, nay even harsh measures appear to me to be a duty; and probably the involuntary gleaming of this idea through the mysterious gloom which concealed the motives of my actions—in addition to my remarkable taciturnity in decisive moments—had called into existence the almost superstitious confidence with which the nation—so uniformly and to the last deceived in regard to its desperate condition by Kossuth and his party—looked to me of necessity as its saviour, at that time also when, with a simultaneous disregard of every humane consideration, a last vain attempt for salvation could be dared.

A third question will be: whether I did or did not attempt, when in Presburg, to obtain for myself the dictatorship; and what were my reasons? Did I not distinctly hear an inward call to seize, even with despotic power, upon the march of my country's destiny; had I not even at that time a firm conviction of the necessity of a dictatorship; had I not been able to foresee that Kossuth would be just as unsuccessful a dictator as he had been a successful agitator?



In the face of all these truths, unless I were to deny their existence, it would be incomparable more difficult for me to answer this question in a mysterious than in a clear and distinct manner.

Have I ever aspired to the dictatorship ?

No.

Why did I never make any effort to obtain it ?

Because the dictatorship in my hands would have been an impossibility, nay a sheer absurdity.

Why would the dictatorship in my hands have been an impossibility, a sheer absurdity ?

Because I spent the whole of my early youth, up to the month of April 1848—precisely the season best adapted for acquiring information—beyond the frontiers of my native land, almost apart from any connection with it, and nearly ignorant of my country's customs, usages, and laws, and above all, wholly deficient in even a superficial and general acquaintance with the civil administration ; ignorant to such a degree, that in strictly political matters, for instance, I was obliged to believe, generally on the mere word of the Committee of Defense, that their measures were judicious, and favorable to the idea that directed all my efforts.

Because, being still unknown to the country, and not possessing the confidence of the nation, I could, under the most favorable circumstances, only have usurped the name without the real power of a dictator ; and because, even when, somewhat later, a part of the nation began to put confidence in me, my power as dictator—considering the difference between my political views and those of Kossuth, who still continued to be the most popular man in Hungary—would have been by so much the more precarious, the less I was able to replace his civil administration by a more suitable one, and to render his agitation against me abortive by more effective counteraction.

These are the reasons why the idea of obtaining for myself the dictatorship was a sheer absurdity. I never thought of it, so long as the events of the war and their results left even the narrowest field for the exercise of the civil government.

Instead of this, with a frank acknowledgment of all my deficiencies in that matter, and chiefly only that I might not lose all my influence in the adjustment of the approaching struggle in self-defense, I often accommodated myself even to positively

unsuitable decrees of the civil government ; and this principally at the commencement, when my removal from the chief command would have been an easy task to the Committee of Defense.

Thus it happened that, in spite of the numerous controversies between us, we all remained at our posts—Kossuth, the Committee of Defense, and the Minister of War on one side ; myself on the other. My adversaries, however, at the beginning, apparently only through *pure* dread of the phantom of a military government, placed me in situations, against whose undermining influence on my determination to follow steadily the cause I had chalked out for myself, I took refuge in sarcasm, my constant and faithful ally when driven almost to desperation.

The following passage, from one of those letters which I wrote during my sojourn at Presburg, is, it must be admitted, a rather trivial production in this strain. At the same time this passage sketches very faithfully the critical position of the army on the upper Danube, and not less faithfully the moderation of my hopes for the future.

PRESBURG, 21st November, 1848.

“DEAR FRIEND—When I shall have been gathered to my fathers, if your hand has not mouldered in the grave, sit down and write the history of Don Quixote the younger ; in me you will find the hero of the romance.

“He who never saw a revolutionary army, may undertake a pilgrimage to my camp. There is a commander-in-chief, with staff and suite, not one of them over forty ! There are also soldiers ; but the real soldier among them blushes for his comrades. To command, is here to make one’s self ridiculous. A reprimand is declaimed against as an impertinence, punishment as a tyranny. Therefore thought I with myself in my simplicity, ‘Eat, bird, or die !’\* and drive these worthless fellows to the devil—that is, if I do not previously order them to be shot. The cholera assists ; and if the enemy does his part, the trio will soon have finished the game.

“But I can not comprehend this fellow. He is at least twice as strong as I am ; his troops are well drilled and well equipped ; yet he does not attack !

\* A proverb expressive of the necessity of yielding to the force of circumstances—*Transl.*

"Can this be mother-wit; and can he have so much calculation as to wish to destroy us through inaction? I can not believe it, and smell a rat—in good German, *paura*. So much the better for us! All his patrols ask only for hussars; my first attempt shall be, to make him ask for the Honvéds also. The young fellows are not much disposed to venture themselves, unless they have each a cannon in their haversack, and besides that one hussar on their right, and another on their left hand. But patience! The fever will abate at length—it is true the Hungarian fever generally lasts a good while—I hope it will do so before next spring, that is, if we live so long; then you may rejoice, *trifolium*, Windischgrätz, Jellachich, Hurban!\*

"Of guns I have already enough to feed pigs with. This very day I have written to Kossuth not to send me any more. I do not trust the volunteers; they run away very good-naturedly, and leave me stuck fast in the mire.

"But I have no percussion-caps; and you, in all probability, are no better off. There will be good fun. Is there no supply at all of Belgian caps? Shouldn't you think that, in the end, a flint-musket would be even better than a percussion-musket—without caps?

"When messieurs the commanders of the battalions ask me for caps, I give them the stereotyped answer: 'I am very glad that I have none. You hit nothing; attack with the bayonet!' Good God, what long faces!" . . . . .

The establishment of the fortifications at Presburg, as well as those at Wieselburg and Raab, furnished me with abundant matter for similar reflections.

When I arrived at Presburg, the defensive works were already half finished. They seemed to me wholly superfluous, considering, on the one hand, the menacing position which Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich occupied in our rear, and on the other taking into account the very probable supposition that the main forces of the enemy, advancing by Edenburg and through the forest of Parendorf, would enter the interior of the country; and

\* Prince Windischgrätz, Ban Jellachich, and Hurban (the latter a Slavonian ecclesiastic from one of the northern comitates of Hungary), were then considered to be the representatives of the movement which aimed at the overthrow of the Hungarian Constitution and the destruction of the "State of Hungary."



thus, in an indirect manner, force those of our troops, stationed on the road to Presburg and near the fortress, to retreat in the direction of Komorn. But these fortifications were likewise unsuitable in regard to their disposition as well as to their execution. Nevertheless, they had the sympathy of the country, and had to be continued. Besides, if I had ordered them to be suspended, this would have deprived me of all influence for the immediate future.

With the defensive works at Wieselburg and Raab the case was different. These had, generally speaking, my approbation so far as the necessity for their establishment was concerned; and this as precautionary, in case the enemy should defer acting on the offensive till the following spring. From want of time, however, I was obliged to leave the planning of the works, as well as their execution, entirely to Kollmann, who was then considered the most celebrated man in his profession.

Unacquainted with the nature and disposition of the ground near Raab, I had entertained the mistaken notion that with a force so disproportionate to that which the Prince Windischgrätz had at his command, I should succeed in stopping at that place the further progress of the enemy; and it was not till I beheld for the first time the fortifications of the encampment at Raab, which were then almost finished, that my mistake was plainly apparent. They had been established for an army of 80,000 men at least, while my whole forces amounted to scarcely more than 12,000; and the reciprocal protection between the several isolated works had been calculated for a distance which defied the effect of field-pieces of the largest calibre.

Thus the affairs of Hungary at the end of the autumn of 1848 were in a very tottering condition.

I had been president of the court-martial by which Count Eugene Zichy\* was condemned to death; I was called "the soul" of the short and successful campaign against Generals Roth and Philippovich; and it is a fact, that after I had been invested with the command over the troops on the upper Danube, the

\* From Presburg I had directed proceedings to be taken against Captain Vásárhelyi of the Hunyady-Schar (belonging to Perczel's corps) for the plunderings of which he was accused in the castle of Kálozd. Hereupon I received a report from the south of Hungary, that Vásárhelyi had fallen in an insignificant skirmish, soon after the disarming of the Croat corps under General Roth.

taking up of arms assumed a far more determined character than it had ever before done ; but still its real nature did not at all warrant the expectation of such an energetic resistance as would have been worthy of the inheritors of the name of a noble and heroic nation.

The former of these two prominent periods of my last sphere of action provoked the arrogance of the Committee of Defense ; the latter, that of almost the whole nation. As respects the Committee of Defense—because the *former* of these two incidents having put to flight its political adversaries in Hungary, it enjoyed by this means an absolute and undisturbed power ; as respects the nation—because the *latter* brought into vogue the silly delusion, that the Hungarian by merely taking up his scythe would frighten the enemy out of the land, or that he had but to disarm him, and send him generously home again !

The governors (Kossuth and his party) gave themselves up more blindly to this delusion than those whom they governed ; and placing no confidence in the regular troops, they now believed themselves strong enough, and saw no danger whatever in openly shewing to the latter this want of confidence.

Wounded by this suspicion on the one hand, and on the other instinctively scenting revolutionary designs behind it, the regular troops were even in the month of November, 1848, almost ripe for revolt.

The declaration which I issued in the name of the army, in answer to a second proclamation by Prince Windischgrätz, stating that the Committee of Defense was, in the present condition of Hungary, its sole and lawful government, scarcely sufficed to retain the services of the officers of the regular troops for the national cause. Better was the impression I made by defending most energetically their interests against the Committee of Defense ;—still better the influence produced by the constant homage which was paid to the Committee of Defense by the minister of war, Mézáros, who held his charge from the king—(this minister was unquestionably a lawful political compass to the regular troops during their revolutionary wandering in Hungary, though a very uncertain one—a circumstance of which the officers could not be aware at that time) ;—but the best effect was owing to the manner and form in which the sudden change on the throne took place during the first half of the month of December, 1848.

## CHAPTER XII.

On the 14th or 15th of December, 1848, Field-marshal Simunich attacked our brigade between Nádas and Jablonicz, and forced it back toward Tyrnau.

Before I resolved on quitting Presburg, in consequence of this disaster, I wished to endeavor to drive the enemy once more back across the White Mountains, and sent Colonel Count Guyon and Lieutenant-colonel Pusztelnik with reinforcements to Tyrnau.

On the 16th of December, however, the general advance of the hostile main army took place against the points Parendorf, Neudorf (Ujfalú), Gattendorf (Gáta), Baumern (Körtvelyes), and Kittsee, which were occupied by our troops.

From the great superiority of the enemy's forces, our resistance along the whole line could be only of short duration, without danger of being annihilated.

The commander of the brigade in Parendorf had not reflected upon this, and had engaged himself too far in the combat, while the hostile column directed against Neudorf met there with but an insignificant opposition. By the unobstructed advance of the latter, the former lost his communication with the neighboring brigade in Gattendorf.

When this had been reported to me from Gattendorf, I ordered the whole line between Parendorf and Presburg to be relinquished, in order to commence the retreat to Altenburg (Magyar Óvár), and Wieselburg (Moson), as had been determined upon beforehand. Presburg, however, was to be held during the following day, till our outposts from the march had assembled there. The pontoon across the Danube was to be abandoned to the stream. After the arrival of the last outpost the garrison of Presburg was to retreat without delay to Komorn.

I left the execution of this order to Colonel Aulich, commander of the second foot-regiment (Alexander).

My presence was necessary on the right bank of the Danube. I left Presburg, therefore, while yet night, between the 16th and



17th of December; took my way to Altenburg by Sommerein (Somorja), on the Grosse Schütt (Csallóköz), crossed on the morning of the 17th the great Danube between Csöleszt and Kiliti, and reached Altenburg and Wieselburg with a few attendants in the course of the forenoon, where I found assembled the troops which had been repulsed the preceding day; those from Neudorf, Gattendorf, Baumern, and Kittsee, without loss; but of those who had been distributed in Parendorf, Neusiedel (Nezsider), Weiden (Védeny), and Gols (Gállos), only the cavalry with their guns and the fourteenth Honvéd battalion. The rest of the infantry and artillery, by the speedy advance of the enemy upon Neudorf, had been forced from their line of retreat to Altenburg away toward the marshes of the Neusiedel lake. Across these, however, the so-called Pamhagen dam, between Pamhagen (Pomogy) and Eszterháza leads; but this dam also was impassable at that time; and I could not help fearing that the missing divisions were irrecoverably lost.

The spirits of the troops, in consequence of this very sensible loss, were extremely depressed. A single cannon-shot seemed sufficient to dishearten the men, especially the infantry, to the last degree. I had, at least, to be prepared for the worst; and therefore sent back the whole of the infantry, together with the foot artillery, toward Raab, before a hostile attack on Altenburg or Wieselburg could be possible; but I intended to wait with the cavalry till mid-day of the 18th of December in the camp of the last-named places, to hinder, if necessary, the too speedy advance of the enemy upon the main road.

Mid-day of the 18th came, without an enemy being visible; and I now ordered one-half of the cavalry likewise to retreat toward Raab. This half, however, had been on its way scarcely half an hour, when the remaining half was alarmed by a hostile column of cavalry advancing from the west.

It is easily conceivable that the enemy—whatever were his intentions—must be firmly repulsed before I could hope to continue my retreat perfectly free from danger. The half of the cavalry which had already set out was immediately ordered back again, to form the reserve in the impending encounter.

Both Altenburg and Wieselburg are inclosed by a canal on the west and south. Between this canal and these places we encamped; the enemy approached on the other side of it. All the

bridges across the canal except one had already been destroyed. This one was situated to the east of our camp, on our line of retreat to Raab.

Notwithstanding this, the enemy marched at first directly toward that part of the canal which was just opposite our front, until some shots obliged him to change the direction of his march. He inclined toward the south ; but continued uninterruptedly his advance against our line of retreat, though describing a considerable circuit.

It would certainly now have been easy to have gained upon him such a considerable advance, on the shortest line over the remaining bridge along the road to Raab, as would have made it impossible for him to overtake us and force us to an engagement. But I feared above all the pernicious effects of a repeated retreat, without previous combat, on the future maintenance of my troops, and resolved to engage the enemy at all hazards. For this purpose I crossed the canal by the bridge, and advanced on the other side to meet him.

We encountered each other to the south of Wieselburg ; he with his left, we with our right wing leaning on the canal.

At first it seemed as if he intended to fight a very serious conflict. He dispatched a part of his forces to turn round our left wing to the south ; and from the front of his position promptly and spiritedly answered the fire of our approaching guns. But when our left wing advanced in echelons to the attack of the hostile turning-column, the enemy seemed to have suddenly lost his eager desire for the contest. He abandoned one position after another, without even bringing his forces into action ; and before sunset he had escaped from our further attacks by means of such a speedy retreat in the direction of Kaltenstein, that, as I learned by a report from our extreme wing, he had not even found the time necessary for placing in security such of his men as had become disabled. Some of them, who were left to save themselves by means of their still sound legs, had been overtaken by a patrol of hussars, and cut down in the first heat.

It was a striking circumstance in this encounter, that in spite of the cannonade, which lasted several hours, not one of the enemy's shots had told ; while the positions which he had abandoned were marked here and there by traces of blood, and some carcasses of horses.

Before my arrival at Wieselburg the Committee of Defense had ordered the destruction by fire of all such stores of corn and hay as it would not be possible to transport to Komorn. In fact, I remarked even during the fight the burning of corn-stacks on the southeastern extremity of Wieselburg. But not far distant from the corn which had been set on fire, a long double row of very large hay-ricks stood still untouched; and a column of hostile cavalry, as we saw, had already entered Altenburg on the north, between the canal and the town, and was just advancing toward Wieselburg. A bold stroke was necessary to destroy likewise these immense supplies of hay, to the detriment of the enemy. Twelve hussars undertook it voluntarily; they crossed to the other side of the canal at the risk of their lives, and notwithstanding the proximity of the enemy, set fire to all the hay-ricks. The like was done in some farms situated toward the Hanság, before our departure from the field of battle.

On the morning of the 18th my troops were still extremely dejected; the evening found them full of courage. They had seen the enemy flee; and they continued their retreat, from the field of battle they had victoriously maintained, toward Raab, in the best possible spirits. This advantage, of the utmost importance to us at that time, we owed solely to the fortunate accident that the hostile commander on this occasion had somewhat too great a desire to fight for a mere reconnoitering, and, on the other hand, somewhat too little for a serious engagement.

Before midnight we reached Hochstrass (Ottevény), and on the following day (the 19th of December) Raab.

The stores of hay and corn which were discovered by our patrols nearest to the main road, were likewise burnt during this retreat; that the enemy, obliged to meet his most pressing wants by conveying supplies thither from great distances, might be continually stopped in his advance.

Soon, however, we perceived the disproportion between the very great loss to the rural population, and the small advantage to the defense of the country, which resulted from these hard measures, and desisted from further devastations.

In Raab the joyful news had meanwhile arrived that the divisions of infantry and artillery from Parendorf, missing since the 16th, had nevertheless succeeded in safely reaching the road from Edenburg to Raab, after restoring as far as necessary the



numerous bridges over the Pamhagen dam that had been destroyed. This lucky escape was owing to the circumstance, that the hostile column, which by the 15th had advanced as far as Eödenburg, was in the course of the 16th not forward enough to render impossible the debouching of the fugitives on the above-named road near Eszterháza.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

THE President Kossuth wrote to me at Raab, not to give up that place for at least ten days. In this matter he had addressed himself to the wrong person. To determine how long Raab should remain in our power depended, considering the numerical superiority of the hostile troops, only and exclusively on the good pleasure of Prince Windischgrätz. He was pleased to defer the attack upon Raab until the 27th; and thus it happened that the wish of the President, reckoned from the date of his above-mentioned dispatch, was gratified.

On what idea this desire was based has not even subsequently become clear to me.

In the evening of the 26th a report from the northern outposts on the Kleine-Schütt (Szigetköz) reached my head-quarters at Raab, that a strong hostile turning-column coming from Zámoly had already advanced along the great Danube so far, that it menaced the road from Raab to Gönyö (one of our lines of retreat). A similar manœuvre of the enemy was to be expected on the south of Raab. I now perceived the necessity of quitting Raab before daybreak next morning, and beginning the retreat toward the capital in two columns. Two-thirds of the corps, together with the head-quarters, were directed to Dotis (Tata) along the so-called Fleischhacker road, one-third over Gönyö. The main road along the Danube was to be left open for the train of the army and its escort, moving from Presburg by Komorn to the capitals.

It was indeed high time to evacuate Raab, if my intention of reserving our forces for the last decisive combat before Ofen

was to be realized; for the column retreating from Raab by Gönyö was already attacked by the enemy's turning-column, at a short distance behind Raab, and could continue its retreat unhindered only after it had repulsed the attack.

I had been induced to form the intention just mentioned by the heroic declaration of the government: *they would be buried under the ruins of Ofen*. I had already successfully combated a similar longing for the ruins of Raab, by showing that *Raab was not Hungary*. But the tenacity with which Kossuth seemed desirous of clinging to this idea, entitled me to suppose *that the government was really resolved on a last decisive battle before Ofen*; and I believed I was bound to subordinate to this magnanimous determination even my own intention, according to which, as I had already declared in Presburg, *the seat of the government must be transferred to behind the Theiss*.

The first station of the march of our main column was Bábolna and its environs.

Very early on the next day, the 28th of December, the retreat ought to have been continued. But a strict observance of the dispositions enjoined, in an army consisting for the most part of young, little-disciplined troops, is a rare occurrence. And so it happened that the early hour fixed for setting out on the march on the 28th was not kept. The rear-guard was obliged to wait before Bábolna for the moving off of some retarded divisions belonging to the main body, and was there overtaken by a troop of the enemy in pursuit.

The commander of the rear-guard perceiving the danger which threatened him, if he engaged in a serious contest at the entrance of a defile, as the road through Bábolna was, posted his artillery and infantry at gun-range behind the village; but one half of the cavalry had to oppose the entrance of the enemy into the village until the other half, following the artillery and infantry, should have taken up their position in the rear, at a distance necessary for the attack.

But on this unlucky day even the generally brave hussars had not their heart in the right place. They fled without awaiting the attack, precipitated themselves on the still-marching divisions of infantry and on the artillery, throwing the former into confusion, startling the horses of the latter, and completely discouraging all the divisions of the rear-guard. In vain the commander

of the rear-guard opposed the fugitives ; in vain he exhorted the divisions of infantry to remain compact and to offer a firm resistance ; a panic terror paralyzed every energy. Even before the enemy's cavalry debouched from Bábolna, the batallions had lost all firmness ; two of them saved themselves, in scattered flight, on some tracts of intersected ground ; the third was overtaken by the hostile cavalry, and partly cut down, partly made prisoners.

The hussars fled without stopping till they came to the Czenczó brook near Nagy Igmánd. Here the partly steep, partly marshy banks first set bounds to their wild flight. Besides the battalion mentioned we also lost an ammunition-chest

The main body, together with the head-quarters, reached on this day Felső-Gállá ; the rear-guard, Bánhida, on the north-western declivity of that chain of mountains which, being the continuation of the Bakony forest, extends in manifold windings, in a northeastern direction mainly, as far as the Danube near Visegrád, and bears the name of Vértesi Hegyek.

*" Here"—so said every one—" the enemies of the country shall find their grave ! The people are already preparing to dig it broad and deep ! The few roads and ways which lead across this ridge shall be destroyed ; then it becomes an impregnable gigantic fortress, AND THE PEOPLE READY TO VANQUISH OR DIE THEREON ! The Fleischhacker road runs between Bánhida and Bicske through a defile, as does also the road from Kis-Bér to Móor at Sárkány. Here, as there, a single resolute division can stop a whole army !"*

And I—to whom the skeleton of the principal mountain-chains, roads, and rivers of Hungary was then scarcely familiar, and who knew of the nature of the Vértesi Hegyek only generally that they existed—allowed myself to be induced by this talk to agree to the following plan of defense.

The head-quarters of the corps of the upper Danube were to be removed back for the winter, in the last extremity, as far as Bicske ; the winter-quarters to be established along the Vértesi Hegyek, with their principal stations at Almás, Tata, Bánhida, Kecskéd and Ondód. Moriz Perczel, meanwhile advanced to the rank of general—who would by no means subordinate himself to the command of the army of the upper Danube, and wished moreover to remain independent—had taken on himself the defense of the Sárkány defile by means of a small regular corps,



and of the tracts of ground lying between this defile and the Platten lake (Balaton) by patrolling columns. The so-called guerrilla warfare would in this way be applied on the largest scale, and protect the organization of a most imposing army, to be concentrated in the capitals and their environs.

In conformity with this plan, General Perczel was conducted sufficiently early from Pápa to Kis-Bér, that he might immediately commence his part of the duty, by occupying and defending the Sárkány defile.

I believed, it is true, in the possibility of a general rising of the people causing very considerable disturbances in the combined operations of even a larger, well-disciplined, and well-led army; nay, I still believe it. But I did not believe that the all-pervading and enduring enthusiasm indispensable for this existed among the Hungarian rural population, whose indolence had long ago become proverbial, and whose warlike spirit, extolled to the stars, I had already learned to appreciate, *by my own experience*, in its utter worthlessness.

The little sympathy for the national contest, which, during my retreat from Raab to the capitals, I met with almost every where in the country, did not consequently take me unawares. But much more surprised was I by the view which I obtained, on the very day of the disaster at Bábolna and directly after it, during a reconnoitering ride in the mountains represented as being *so extremely impracticable*, of their real nature, as well as of the defensive works so highly lauded in the communications of the Committee of Defense. These latter had been eulogised to such a degree, that, during my retreat from Raab, I almost feared *we should hardly be able to find a passage open for our own safety*. We met indeed with ditch-works on the road, which we could march past without the least interruption—not, as it might be supposed, through the space which had been left for us, but far and wide, to the right and to the left. We found likewise some abatis constructed, to the utility of which our good-natured Honvéds, in their childlike *naïveté*, bore the most conscientious testimony by setting light to them for the purpose of warming themselves at the fire. But we searched in vain for the place which some government commissary had taken for a “defile.”

In consequence of my having been undeceived in these respects I removed the head quarters on the 29th of December to Bicske;

and perceiving that the whole great plan for the defense of the Vértesi mountain-range was *just as great an absurdity*, I began to draw my troops nearer to the mountains, that I might secure the Fleischhauer road as far as possible.

It was more than probable that the enemy's main army would advance on *this* road; while, on the contrary, only his secondary forces would take that from Raab by Kis-Bér, Sárkány, and Móor, which General Perczel with his corps would be so much the more capable of resisting, as I had already detached a strong column of cavalry, with a battery, from Raab to Ondód, to the north of Móor, and during the retreat from Kócs a brigade by Kecskéd and Majk to Csákvár, to prevent his being turned round on the right, and to maintain him in communication with my corps.

The part of my troops which had been ordered for the retreat from Raab by Gönyö to Dotis was consequently drawn back to Zsámbék; while Colonel Guyon retreated after crossing the Danube, on the main road to Vörösvár, having previously, on his way, hazarded an engagement in Tyrnau, which was *equally unlucky as aimless*, with the far superior forces of Field-marshal Simunich, and had then marched toward Komorn.

The rest of my forces, which on the 16th of the same month were disposed on the left bank of the Danube, had partly remained as garrison in Komorn, and partly had rejoined me while I was still in Raab.

Immediately after my arrival at Bicske on the evening of the 29th of December, I learned that a carriage-road existed from this place to A.-Gála, sufficiently practicable to turn round upon it, even with artillery, any position *à cheval* of the Fleischhauer road between these places. Certainty on this point appeared to be of great importance with reference to the dispositions next to be made. I employed the 30th of December to obtain in person this certainty; left for that purpose my head-quarters early in the morning, and returned only toward evening, at the moment when whole swarms of dispersed troops from Perczel's corps arrived with the disastrous news, that *General Perczel had been attacked by the Austrians between Móor and Sárkány, and had suffered a total defeat.*

My army, then divided into six brigades, occupied on the 30th of December the following positions: a brigade on the main road

of Vörösvár, one in Zsámbék, one in Bicske, one in Csákvár, one in F.-Gála, and one in Buda-Örs.

Several of these brigades had furnished their contingent for the formation of the column which had been detached to Ondód, as has been mentioned before. But this column had already joined Perczel before the unfortunate engagement near Móor, and was consequently at the moment not disposable.

By those of Perczel's corps who, having been dispersed to Bicske, had reached our camp, almost all his battalions were numerously represented. Hence it might be concluded that his forces had been so scattered, that he would not be able to prevent with the remainder the victorious advance of the hostile right wing on any point *before* the capitals; while the accounts of the fugitives at the same time all led to the apprehension, that in his flight he had taken the direction of Stuhlweissenburg, and thereby given an opportunity to the hostile right wing *to separate him from me by a resolute advance from Móor over Lovas-Berény.*

To avert this impending danger, during the night between the 30th and the 31st of December the brigade from Bicske was dispatched to Baracska, that of Csákvár to Váll, that of Zsámbék to Sóskut, and at the same time that of F.-Gála to Bia. *After the accession of Perczel's corps, the offensive was to be resumed against the enemy's right wing, for the purpose of giving a more favorable turn to the campaign by its destruction.*

But the defeat of General Perczel had broken at once the *Roman courage of the Committee of Defense.*

Early in the morning of the 31st of December, 1848, I received a decree, signed by Kossuth, and drawn up in this instance in *German*, wherein I was ordered to retreat *with my corps d'armée without delay into the first line before Ofen*, that is, on the height of Tétény, Buda-Örs, Budakeszi, and Hidegkut.

I replied by sending a report of the last dispositions, and besides took the liberty of *decidedly blaming the retreat thus ordered*; but was nevertheless obliged to desist from the offensive against the hostile right wing; for without the assistance of Perczel's corps I had no expectation of success, and it was not to be doubted *that Perczel, from personal hostility, would take part against me for this order of the Committee of Defense.*

Still in the course of the 31st of December, as soon as General



Perczel, coming from Stuhlweissenburg, had entered the protecting sphere of my brigades, I drew back that of Váll to the height of Hanzsabég, and that of Baracska to Tárnok. The divisions of the army which had been sent to Bia and Sóskut remained there; those of Vörösvár, however, received an order from the Committee of Defense immediately to approach the capitals. The head-quarters advanced to Promontorium.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

On the 1st of January, 1849, the main body of my army consequently stood in an extensive circuit from Hanzsabég as far as to Bia. I had left my head-quarters very early in the morning to convince myself personally that the dispositions ordered the night before had been strictly observed by all the divisions. I met the ruins of Perczel's corps on the road between Tétény and Hanzsabég, and finally Perczel himself. He rode close to my carriage, and surprised me with the assurance that he had indeed abandoned the field of battle at Móor, but that this circumstance did not in the least justify the supposition that he had been beaten; his loss being far exceeded by that of the enemy, as was made evident by the continual arriving of the dispersed troops.

"Especially," said I, interrupting him, "if you deduct from your loss those runaways also—there are far more than a thousand of them—whom I caused to be driven together one by one in Bicske, and transported to Ofen, where they are awaiting your orders upon the Generalswiese. You probably establish your head-quarters in Pesth?"

"Yes," replied he, "for my personal presence with the government is absolutely necessary at this time; but to my troops I shall grant some days' rest, and shall therefore quarter them in Ofen. The enemy will not recover for a long time from the severe blow I have given him near Móor, and therefore you have nothing at all to fear. I will for certain be on the spot at the right moment."

At that time I could still compassionately laugh at Perczel's boasting; for I was then ignorant of what a few days later I could no longer doubt, namely, *that the manner of speaking and acting of this man was the element in which the Committee of Defense, nay even a great part of the Diet, most complacently moved; a manner of speaking and acting, which, void of any steady moral basis, was well calculated to give birth to the serious apprehension, that the loyal personal sacrifices of the army for the Constitution might be abused as a cloak for the execution of plans of high-treason, and moreover most ruinous to the country.*

When, late in the afternoon, I returned to my head-quarters through Buda-Örs I was informed that meanwhile a deputation sent by the Diet to the hostile general-in-chief, Prince Windischgrätz had been there, and had demanded an escort to the hostile outposts, for which they had been directed to the brigade in Hanzsabég.

These deputies had also brought a letter for me from Kossuth. I felt as if I had fallen from the clouds when I learned from it that the Government and the Diet had the day before decided: *Once more to enter on the way of accommodation; and at the same time*

*To transfer its seat from Pesth to Debreczin; whilst I should give to the enemy a decisive battle in the first line before Ofen; but in doing so, Keep in view the salvation of the army on the left bank of the Danube, and in every possible way the preservation of the capitals.*

Kossuth, to whose memory it could not but be still very vividly present how irritated Prince Windischgrätz had been with him even before the battle at Schwechat, now suddenly once more entered upon the way of accommodation!

*Could he from this step hope for any thing for his country?*  
No.

*Was this an UPRIGHT step?* No; it was merely one VOID OF COUNSEL.

Kossuth, who during the last two months had constantly refused my repeated advice to remove, while it was yet time, the seat of government to behind the Theiss, asseverating that the government would die *first at Raab, then before Ofen*;—

Kossuth, I say, thought now was the time *suddenly* to perceive that Ofen and Pesth were all Hungary *just as little as Raab*, and *that the government, in case of necessity, could die even in Debreczin, or ELSEWHERE.*

What could so suddenly have induced Kossuth subsequently to follow my advice ?

Could it be a *prophetic glance into the approaching glorious future* ? OH, NO ! It was only *la peur pour la peau.*

Probably it was merely *the same* motive which had determined him to order me to give the enemy a decisive battle before Ofen—perhaps to cover his flight to Debreczin.

To this supposition it might at least be objected, that the flight of the government needed no protection, since the speed with which it could be accomplished by railway as far as Szolnok took away all danger of hostile pursuit ; and that perhaps Kossuth so urgently demanded a battle to be fought on the right bank only “for the honor of the nation,” or for the purpose of gaining time to remove the multifarious stores of provisions.

However, be that as it may, the task which Kossuth had assigned to me could only have been assigned by *such a general as Kossuth.*

The chain-bridge, then the sole communication over the Danube, which was scarcely frozen, was only barely practicable ; it could be made use of, but not without precaution. Precaution presupposes leisure ; but it is just of this that there is least during a retreat after a decisive and *lost* battle ; unless a part of the defeated army should sacrifice itself in an obstinate fight by its rear-guard, to secure for the main body the time necessary for its retreat.

But an obstinate fight by the rear-guard is conceivable only when there is a simultaneous use made of all the advantages accidentally offered for the defense on the line of retreat. Houses and rows of houses, among other things, present such advantages.

To enable me to give a last decisive battle to the enemy on the right bank of the Danube, I had previously to reunite the parts of my army which had been separately stationed on the Fleischhauer road and on the main road to Stuhlweissenburg. But the protection of both roads had to be kept in view at the same time as this junction. This was possible only where the two roads opened into one and the same level valley, conse-



quently between Buda-Ors and Promontorium on the one side, and the Brocken (Gellérthegey) on the other. Upon every point further distant from Ofen the concentration of the main army could only have been effected on one of the two hostile lines of attack, while the other must have been abandoned, and with it at the same time our line of retreat to Ofen.

The field presented by local circumstances for the desired last decisive battle on the right bank of the Danube lay, therefore, at a distance from Ofen and the chain-bridge not far exceeding the bounds even of the most sluggish hostile pursuit after a lost battle.

How could the rear-guard stop this pursuit, when neither the suburbs of Ofen nor the town itself were allowed to be occupied and defended, that they might not be exposed to the dangers of a hostile attack? And how was sufficient time to be got for saving the defeated army with precaution, in spite of the unretarded pursuit of the enemy, on to the left bank of the Danube, over the chain-bridge, which had been made practicable only so far as was absolutely necessary?

I hastened early in the morning of the 2d of January to Pesth, to put these questions to Kossuth, and call upon him to renounce either the battle or the salvation of the army, or at least his regard for the capitals and the sympathies of the proprietors of the houses. In case he should accede to none of these modifications, I was determined voluntarily to resign my post. This latter determination had been finally come to principally by my deliberation upon the *motives* of his intended flight to Debreczin.

*But the President was no longer in Pesth when I arrived there on the morning of the 2d of January, 1849.*

With the care of the defense of the country he had charged General Vetter as substitute of the minister of war Mészáros, who—as was generally said—had been sent to destroy a hostile corps under the royal imperial Field-marshal Lieutenant Count Schlick, which had already advanced as far as Kaschau.

I addressed myself consequently with my request to General Vetter, and invited him at the same time to take the command in my stead, because the unfortunate results of the campaign had made me doubt my ability for the post confided to me. General Vetter, however, said that he was not inclined to endanger his renown as a general, acquired laboriously in the war

against the Raizen, by undertaking the conduct of a relinquished campaign. Nevertheless, he promised to call together a council of war, in which my present task should be modified, so as to render it practicable, and a decision be come to upon the measures to be next taken for the defense of the country.

This council of war was assembled in the course of the day, under the presidency of the royal Commissary Csányi, and came to the following resolutions :

*"The principal object in view should be the saving of the army on to the left bank of the Danube.*

*"After accomplishing the retreat, General Perczel with his corps was to draw back toward Szolnok ; while I with mine, by Waizen ( Vác ), had to operate against the hostile corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich on the Waag.*

*"The expedition in the south against the Raizen and Serbians was to be abandoned, and the forces employed in it (under the command of Colonel Count Vécsey) drawn to the middle Theiss, for the protection of the new seat of government.*

*"In case of extremity, the three corps d'armée of Mészáros, Perczel, and Vécsey were to join each other during their concentric retreat to Debreczin ; while it was left to me, according to circumstances, to choose for my point of retreat Komorn or the upper Theiss."*

The object of the council of war in detaching me into the northwestern comitates was TO DIVERT THE HOSTILE MAIN ARMY FROM THE SHORTEST LINE OF OPERATION AGAINST DEBRECZIN.

Meanwhile from 4000 to 5000 infantry had been concentrated in Waizen.

*"These I was to receive on my march through Waizen ; but for them I was to give up from my corps to General Perczel, without delay, one battalion of infantry, twelve squadrons of hussars, and a battery of twelve-pounders.*

*"That the retreat of my corps d'armée from its position on the right to the left bank of the Danube across the chain-bridge might be possible without danger, the enemy's principal attack was not to be awaited.*

*"For the protection of this retreat General Perczel was to occupy the intrenched principal approaches to Ofen."*

Perczel, however, declared that he could not do so before the

following day, almost his whole corps being dispersed through the capitals.

I saw from this that I could not rely on Perczel, and resolved in the mean time myself to take charge of the protection of my retreat.

On the 2d of January my six brigades stood thus :

In Tétény ;

Near Hanzsabég, with the outposts toward Erszi and Mártonvásár ;

In Sóskut, with the outposts in Tárnok, Zámor, and Barátháza ;

In Buda-Ors, with the outposts in Bia ;

Outside Altofen (O-Buda), with the outposts toward Kovácsi, Vörösvár, and Sz.-Endre ; and

In the suburb of Ofen, "Christinenstadt."

In consequence of these resolutions of the council of war, on the 3d of January I removed the brigades from Hanzsabég and Buda-Ors to Ofen, and that of Sóskut to Buda-Ors ; ordered the outposts upon the Fleischhauer road back as far as Csik ; while the brigade of Hanzsabég was not to draw in its outposts till they had been relieved by those of Tétény.

The commander in Hanzsabég had not observed this precautionary measure, but withdrew his outposts before those of Tétény, who were to relieve them, had arrived on the spot, and began his march to Ofen, without remarking—in spite of its being sunshiny mid-day—that a hostile corps, coming from Mártonvásár, was upon his heels.

It was only a lucky accident that saved the brigade of Tétény from an unintentional attack of the enemy in broad daylight.

A division of hussars just in the nick of time threw itself upon the cuirassiers, by whom the outposts of the Tétény brigade, while on their march toward Hanzsabég, had been attacked, and were obstinately pursued already nearly as far as Tétény.

A violent conflict ensued, in which the cuirassiers suffered considerable loss.

Their flight delayed the attack of the hostile corps, and afforded to the Tétény brigade the time necessary to prepare for battle.

The brigade which was on its march from Hanzsabég back to Ofen had meanwhile reached Promontorium. On the first news of the enemy's attack, I ordered it immediately to return, and advance again by Tétény to Hanzsabég. It deployed to the left



of the road to Stuhlweissenburg, while the Tétény brigade was turned toward the right.

Although there were only about 4000 men on the spot at my disposal, I was determined to advance on the offensive.

The combat, however, had scarcely assumed a somewhat more active character, when suddenly an officer, who had been despatched to me from Pesth, arrived on the field of battle, and reported to me, *that General Vetter desired I would not allow myself to be led into any offensive, the enemy having crossed the Danube below Hanzsabég, for the purpose of threatening the capitals from the left bank likewise.*

On receiving this information I immediately began the retreat, and continued it as far as Promontorium, without being pursued by the enemy.

There I allowed the troops to rest for some hours, after which, together with the head-quarters, they were to continue the retreat before midnight, with one part as far as Ofen, with the other as far as Pesth; while I myself rode to Buda-Ors, to order the brigade of that place also to retreat to the left bank. Ofen remained occupied till the following day (4th of January) by my rear-guard, when it was relieved by General Perczel's troops, and followed my main body, which was already on its march for Waizen.

General Vetter was much displeased with this precipitate "salvation of the army on to the left bank of the Danube;" and when, moreover, the news of the enemy's having crossed the river below Hanzsabég—the immediate cause of my retreat—proved to be unfounded, this retreat then appeared in fact to have been over-hurried, at least by one day. What had been done, however, could not be undone.

But General Perczel declared, "*he would rather see the capitals reduced to a mass of ruins, than withdraw without a contest.*"

Fortunately for Ofen and Pesth, Perczel belonged to *that* party whose last proclamations (if there remained no other historical documents of this period) would induce posterity *to dig for the bones of the former Committee of Defense under the walls of Ofen.*

## CHAPTER XV.

IN the night between the 4th and 5th of January, 1849, I quitted Pesth with my head-quarters, and reached Waizen in the course of the next day.

The Hungarian armed rising—although originally stirred up by the *officious* instigation of the nationalities against each other systematically introduced from Vienna, and diametrically opposed to the realization of the idea of a collective Austrian unity, subsequently not less *officially* enounced—was nevertheless *purely* MONARCHICAL-constitutional: and herein lay its strength; for it was to this circumstance *solely* that it owed the co-operation of the regular troops.

Besides, in the year 1848 Hungary could be insurgent *only in a monarchical point of view*.

A proof of this, experienced innumerable times, is, that the agitations in favor of the arming succeeded *only when* they were attempted "*in the name of the King*."

A proof of this are the great difficulties that had to be surmounted, when it was necessary—in contradiction to the proclamations dispersed in great numbers by the authorized or unauthorized agents of the reactionary party, and furnished with the *King's signature*—to procure for the Pesth government, *all legitimate as it was*, an active support in the country.

A proof of this is the being obliged to paralyze the effect of those reactionary proclamations by others, drawn up with a contrary intent, and *likewise in the King's name*.

Nay, even ANTI-DYNASTIC ideas were exotic growths in Hungary. If these were to be acclimatized, the political soil—although the Vienna government measures had right valiantly dug it up—must nevertheless previously have a corresponding manuring.

The manure necessary for this purpose came, so far as I know, from two sources—I am not certain if *primary* ones; namely,

From the *free exercise of popular oratory*, and

From the *faits accomplis* of the Committee of Defense.

Of these two kinds of manure, diverse in origin, which has been the most favorable to the acclimatizing of these exotic ideas is, I think, not yet decided; but this much is certain, *that the old soldiers first scented the filth of the Committee of Defense*, and were not inclined to allow the *legal soil*, on which they had unfortunately to fight against their former comrades, to be *defiled*.

We should certainly go too far were we to attribute to the *political sagacity* of the old soldiers this scenting—perhaps premature—of anti-dynastic tendencies in the acts of the President Kossuth, dating them from the year 1848.

As soon as religious, political, and national ideas divide mankind, there is a generally prevalent inclination to suppose in those of a different opinion the want of all social as well as private virtues; and inversely, from the recognized deficiency in some just then prized virtue, it is commonly immediately concluded that the person deemed blameworthy holds the opinion, religious, political, or national, which happens to be most detested.

This weakness was not foreign to the old troops, of *monarchic-constitutional*, nay, SPECIFICALLY DYNASTIC opinions; and herein, I believe, was the source of their—*alas prophetic*—presentiment.

In the end of October they had confided in Kossuth's asseverations, that the offensive beyond the Lajtha was intended *only for the punishment* of Ban Jellachich, and his allies, the Ban being with reason hated on account of his intrigues, which *first disunited the army*, and against whom, besides, they had been mustered by the King's cousin. In the beginning of December they had received as *true and genuine* Kossuth's declarations that, according to the literal meaning of their military oath, they had to become surety with body and soul, *notwithstanding the proclaimed change in the throne, for King Ferdinand V. and the Constitution sanctioned by him*. They had SUFFERED for *this* belief, and *thereby* became still more inaccessible to doubt what Kossuth said.

When, after this, they had come to the painful conclusion, that, with the superior forces of the enemy, victory was no longer conceivable, then they wished, out of a national and military feeling of honor, for a last and decisive combat—a *glorious fall*!

Kossuth met them half-way, and promised them this combat



before the walls of Ofen; *he himself*—thus he vowed—*would there perish with them!*

And the old soldiers calculated upon it.

But Kossuth, having had sufficient time to consider, since the battle of Schwechat (on the 30th of October) till the moment when he declared his resolution to be buried under the walls of Ofen (about the end of December), whether the removal of the seat of government from Pesth to Debreczin would not perhaps be more conducive to the welfare of the country—and nevertheless discovering for the first time the necessity of this change of residence only when he ought to have redeemed his magnanimous solemn promise; it seemed as if the so sudden recognition of the possibility of saving the country just as well from Debreczin had its motive less in patriotism than *in perceiving that Debreczin happened to be several day's march farther than Pesth from the head-quarters of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz*; and Kossuth, by his improvised official "*Sauve qui peut!*" behind the Theiss, seemed only *à posteriori* to have furnished proof *that he was incapable of dying for the fatherland.*

In a word: The *hero* Kossuth debased himself to a *braggart*; and in the eyes of the *monarchically-minded brave* old soldiers, *Kossuth the braggart* could only be a *republican!*

*Distrust* took the place of confidence in the old troops toward Kossuth. A part of the officers quitted our ranks suddenly; the rest visibly wavered.

Only their *confidence in me* could still secure the latter.

But *this* had already been struck two violent blows.

Immediately after the battle near Wieselburg I had communicated to Kossuth, in rather frivolous phrase, the events of the day, intending to mitigate the painful impression which the report of another retreat must make on him.

The issue of this contest, favorable for us directly on the battlefield; the entirely unimpeded easy retreat from Wieselburg to Hochstrass, in the face of the danger of seeing our whole corps dispersed, to which the most insignificant hostile pursuit would have exposed us—had given me the right to call the combat near Wieselburg a victorious one for us.

"*Ma győztünk!*" ('To-day we have vanquished!') I wrote to Kossuth, and depicted in glowing colors the resolute bearing of the hussars during the engagement; and closed with the en-

couraging words, "*Csak rajta! majd elbánunk mi a czudarokkal!*" ('Cheer up! we will yet be rid of these fellows!')

Kossuth had considered it judicious to make this private letter public through the daily press.

Furthermore, the Government had printed and partly distributed a proclamation to the army, drawn up in the spirit of its last Pesth resolutions—I know not by whom—and, without my authority, containing my signature. In this I was made to urge the army to a last decisive battle under the walls of Ofen, in contradiction to the retreat to the left bank of the Danube, which directly afterward had been ordered by me in person.

The *erroneous* supposition, that *those* private communications about the Wieselburg battle had been intended *by myself* for publication, and that *this* proclamation to the army was genuine—from the great resemblance of both of them to the official rodomontades of Messrs. Kossuth, Perczel, and several others—shook so much the confidence even of those officers who had not then deserted me, that I was obliged to make haste to strengthen it anew by an open exposition of the tendency of our combat, *as I understood it*. I did this in the following address to my corps d'armée.

"TO THE ROYAL HUNGARIAN CORPS D'ARMÉE OF THE UPPER DANUBE.

"The advantages which the numerical superiority of the enemy has obtained over the corps d'armée of the upper Danube, but especially the more recent events, seem, through their naturally discouraging influence, to have shaken in some cases even that noble self-reliance which united us all in this, the most just of struggles.

"To re-animate this shaken self-reliance, and thus revive that courage which has perhaps in some measure been depressed, is the first duty of the leader.

"I discharge this duty especially by opening to the corps d'armée of the upper Danube the prospect of more favorable opportunities, through the impending diversion against a portion of the enemy; but I hope to raise the self-reliance of the corps d'armée principally by speaking out openly and honestly my judgment and conviction concerning what has already been done, as well what we have yet to do.

"I accepted the post which was offered to me, because I believe the cause of Hungary to be a just one.

"And I will maintain my post, so long as it is entrusted to me, should even the best among us become irresolute, and withdraw their arm from the good cause.

"This consciousness enables me, in judging of the events since the 1st of November, 1848, undisguisedly to confess my own mistakes; hoping

thereby to give to the corps d'armée the surest guarantee that more judicious measures will be taken in future.

"I erred when I ceased to urge the Committee of Defense, by unanswerable arguments, to desist from the defense and blockade of the frontier; since all the other mischances to which the corps d'armée has been undeservedly exposed arose solely from the fact, that in consequence of the harassing fatigues of the outpost service, the organization as well as the augmentation and consolidation of the army remained only pious wishes.

"I erred when, in the head-quarters at Bicske, I gave effect to the positive order of the Committee of Defense to retreat with the corps d'armée into the first line before Ofen; because through this retreat, for which there was but little reason, the corps d'armée was placed in the ambiguous light of evading a serious conflict, which would have been decisive for the good cause.

"But I had received these orders from that authority, which the responsible Hungarian minister of war, General Mészáros, elected by the country to this post, and confirmed by our King Ferdinand V., himself recognized, and still continues to recognize, as the supreme governing power; for upon *its* mandate he himself took, and under its ægis retains, the command over the army on the Theiss against General Count Schlick, hostilely opposed to us. And I *could* do this with the calm consciousness that I was committing no illegal action, nor misleading the royal Hungarian corps d'armée, intrusted to my command, into any such action, so long as the Committee of Defense did not disavow itself.

"But when, on the 1st of January, 1849, while the corps d'armée of the upper Danube, prepared for the combat, and notwithstanding the ordered retreat to the first line near Ofen, was still posted at Hanzabég, Tárnok, Sósokot, Bia, &c.—the Committee of Defense, instead of justifying, by its heroic perseverance when in the proximity of danger, the confidence which we had always reposed in its loyalty, in an unaccountable manner suddenly left the capital; and by doing so, and still more by sending a deputation, without our knowledge and consent, to the commander-in-chief of the hostile troops, placed us in a perplexing and desperate, nay, even ambiguous position;—then it was that in many a one among us the suspicion must have arisen that we had been degraded from the eminence due to us as defenders of the constitutional liberty of Hungary, down to that abasement in which the usual methods for the furtherance of personal private interests are accustomed to be successfully pursued.

"Without denying the loyalty of the Committee of Defense—however deeply it may have shaken by its sudden disappearance from the capital our confidence in it—I believe it to be my duty to invite the corps d'armée, that it may be preserved from the most miserable of all fates, that of utter internal dissolution, either, after mature deliberation, to adopt as its own the following declaration, the purpose of which is to secure us against any suppositions injurious to our honorable position; or to declare openly whatever different views it may entertain on the subject."

(My signature follows.)

This declaration runs thus :

"The royal Hungarian corps d'armée of the upper Danube—the nucleus of which, with the staff, once belonged to the Austrian united forces, until,



after the recognition of the royal Hungarian ministry of war, the Hungarian regiments were placed exclusively under its authority—in obedience to the will of the constitutional King of Hungary, took oath to the Hungarian constitution. It was at first opposed, under the chief command of the Archduke Palatine, to the royal imperial troops under Jellachich; and, in spite of the saddest political confusions, always faithful to its oath, has hitherto complied only with the orders of the responsible royal Hungarian ministry of war, or with those of the Committee of Defense, declared by the former authority to be legal.

“Supported by this irrefutable fact, the corps d’armée of the upper Danube accordingly protests most decidedly against the supposition of having ever served the *private interests* of any party in Hungary, and declares that all such rumors are *infamous calumnies*. But the same irrefutable fact of the unshaken fidelity with which the corps d’armée of the upper Danube, in fighting for the maintenance of the Hungarian constitution, has indefatigably submitted itself to all decrees of the Committee of Defense, and this in spite of the most inexpressible privations and deceptions, fairly entitled the corps d’armée to expect that the Committee of Defense would at least scrupulously avoid one thing, namely, placing the corps d’armée in an ambiguous position.

“After the corps d’armée of the upper Danube had protected the frontier, according to the orders of the Committee of Defense, during a month and a half with a rare self-denial, by the most fatiguing outpost service;—after it had victoriously repulsed the enemy, though much stronger, in the battle at Wieselburg;—after it had undauntedly held the desperate position at Raab, until the moment when its right flank was already turned by the enemy, and when its own retreat, necessary for the salvation of the capitals, could be rendered possible only by an obstinate conflict with the hostile turning-column;—after it had held itself ready for fight, partly before, partly behind Dotis, Bánhida, Neszmély, Csákvár, Zámoly, Ondód, and Sárkány, until the victorious advance of the enemy’s right wing by Móor caused us to resume the offensive by Mártonvásár, though obliged in consequence of the positive order of the Committee of Defense to exchange this offensive for the defensive before Ofen; and all this without having met with those much-dreamt-of sympathies of the inhabitants of the circle on the other side the Danube, and without even the least preparation having been made by the Committee of Defense to hinder the advance of the enemy’s superior forces on the main and by-roads to the communications of the above-named places;—there remained but *one* consoling prospect for the much-suffering corps d’armée—that of a decisive combat immediately in front of and *in* the capitals of Hungary.

“The former resolute tone of the decrees of the Committee of Defense, as well as its proclamations to the people, justified the expectation, that at this decisive moment, so long desired and now at last come, it would display an all-inspiring energy.

“And instead of all that *should* and *could* have been done, there arrived at the head-quarters at Promontorium, on the 1st of January, 1849:

- “1. The information that the Committee of Defense had left the capitals.
- “2. A decree of the Committee of Defense, that a decisive battle should be fought upon the first line before Ofen, at the height of Tétény, Bia,

&c., but without sacrificing the corps d'armée, or exposing the capitals to a bombardment; that is to say, were the battle lost, the corps d'armée, in spite of only one passage being secured across, and in spite of the pursuing enemy, should be saved upon the left bank of the Danube, without the defense of the town.

"3. The order to escort a deputation to the commander-in-chief of the enemy's army.

"Any one of these three facts, viewed separately, would have been sufficient in itself to shake the confidence of the corps d'armée in the members of the Committee of Defense; but taken together they must excite apprehensions that the corps d'armée had been, up to this moment—to use the mildest expression—a useful but dangerous tool in unpracticed hands.

"To be able to maintain its position unshaken and upon strictly lawful grounds amid the political intrigues to which our poor country may very shortly be exposed, the corps d'armée of the upper Danube publicly makes the following declaration:

"1. The corps d'armée of the upper Danube remains faithful to its oath, to fight resolutely against every external enemy for the maintenance of the constitution of the kingdom of Hungary sanctioned by King Ferdinand V.

"2. With the same resolution, the corps d'armée of the upper Danube will oppose itself to all those who may attempt to overthrow the constitutional monarchy by untimely republican intrigues in the interior of the country.

"3. It is a natural consequence of the right understanding of constitutional monarchy—a form of government for the maintenance of which the corps d'armée of the upper Danube is determined to contend to the last—that it can obey only and exclusively those orders which are forwarded to it in the form prescribed by law through the responsible royal Hungarian minister of war, or through his representative appointed by himself (at present General Vetter).

"4. The corps d'armée of the upper Danube, mindful of the oath taken to the constitution of Hungary, and mindful of its own honor, having remained perfectly conscious of what it *has* to do and is *determined* to do, declares, finally, that it will adhere to the result of any convention made with the enemy, only if it guarantees on the one hand the integrity of the constitution of Hungary, to which the corps d'armée has sworn, and on the other, if it is not inimical to the military honor of the corps d'armée itself.

(My signature follows.)

Neither within or without my corps d'armée, to my knowledge has any voice publicly been heard against this proclamation.

The old soldiers regained their confidence in me and in the cause which I represented, and ceased to waver.

They could not anticipate that they had come out of the rain to get under the spout—thanks to the dependence of the war-

minister Mészáros on the president Kossuth; a fact of which they were not then aware.

I, on the contrary, had already remarked when in Presburg manifold indications that Mészáros was not independent, but had considered these, at that time, only as a natural consequence of his really powerless position, from the good understanding existing between myself and Kossuth, and found no reason for suspecting that symptoms of a moral defect remained in the courageous old soldier—the original existence of which could not be reconciled either with Mészáros remaining at his post, nor with the obstinacy with which he had hitherto opposed every modification in war-business though approved of by experienced military men—after this *powerless* position of the minister of war had been changed into a *powerful* one by my decided espousing of his side.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

THE corps d'armée of the upper Danube, according to the muster-rolls consisting of from 15,000 to 16,000 men, underwent in Waizen a new classification into four divisions: two wing-divisions, one centre division, and one reserve.

Colonel Aulich commanded the division of the right wing, Colonel Kmety that of the centre, Colonel Count Guyon that of the reserve. The command of the division of the left wing was likewise confided to a Honvéd colonel.

Each division consisted of two brigades, under distinct brigade-commanders.

These divisions were almost equal in strength, and differed little from each other in their relative proportions of the three kinds of force (infantry, cavalry, and artillery).

The division of the left wing alone was directed from Waizen along the Danube as far as the Eipel (Ipoly), but afterward in a northwestern direction, on the shortest line, toward Tyrnau. The division of the right wing moved at the same time by Rétság, Nagy-Oroszi, Szántó, Lévenecz (Léva), Verebély, toward Leopold-



stadt, the fort on the Waag to be relieved. The right flank was followed at intervals of a day's march by the centre and the reserve.

By detaching the division of the left wing between the fortress of Komorn and the hostile corps concentrated round Leopoldstadt, it was intended to divert the attention of the latter at first from the danger menacing from the south, and to induce it to lay itself open to our principal attack from the east.

On the 10th of January the divisions of both wings reached the little river Zsitva, the right wing near Verebély, the left two (German) miles southward from that place; the division of the centre, together with the head-quarters, Lévenecz; that of the reserve, Szántó.

The division of the right wing (Aulich) was the van-guard, and the division of the reserve (Guyon) the rear-guard of the corps d'armée.

On the said day the Aulich division on its entrance into Verebély encountered the van-guard of the hostile corps under Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich; while the Guyon division, just when marching out from Ipolyság was overtaken and attacked by the hostile corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich, which had been ordered to pursue us.

The reports of both occurrences reached my head-quarters at Lévenecz almost at the same time.

Colonel Count Guyon, too weak to repel the hostile attack, had soon withdrawn, with little loss, and speedily continued his march to Szántó.

The division of the left wing advanced on the 11th of January from the river Zsitva to Komjáthi on the river Neutra; the other three divisions of the corps d'armée had to rest a day in their stations of Verebély, Lévenecz, and Szántó.

I left Lévenecz on the morning of this day to ride to Szántó, that I might learn the particulars of the conflict which had taken place at Ipolyság. On my route I heard some discharges of artillery from the direction of Szántó. I could only suppose that the Guyon division had been again attacked, and quickened my pace.

At about half an hour's distance from Szántó I found the Guyon division in a defensive position *à cheval* of the road, expecting the attack of the enemy, though he was nowhere to be seen. The cannon-shots had been fired at a party of our own

recruits, which marched across the fields toward the division, for the purpose of joining it.

Colonel Count Guyon was certainly a very brave officer, but his ignorance equaled his bravery. Without having sent out even a single patrol from Szántó toward Ipolyság, which would have brought him long ago the certain news that the enemy was still in Ipolyság; he had given away to the unfounded apprehension that he was most obstinately pursued, had started at day-break from Szántó toward Lévenecz, and believed that he must prepare for a mortal combat on the very spot where I found him vainly expecting the enemy. He had taken the recruits for a hostile turning-column. The few shots which he fired at them completely sufficed to frighten the poor devils hap-hazard into *that* valley which was situated between his position and the declivity on which they had just marched. But Colonel Guyon thought this movement was a desperate attempt to attack his position, until at last he was awoke from his dream by some volunteer hussars who had been ordered to charge the recruits.

While Colonel Guyon expected the enemy in his position between Szántó and Lévenecz, the latter could unobserved take the shortest road from Ipolyság, by Némethi, to Schemnitz (Selmeczbánya), and occupy the district of the mountain-towns without drawing a blade; or he could rest himself in Ipolyság for one or even two days, after his recent forced march, and make the brave Colonel Guyon for the present maintain his most injudiciously chosen position—against *ennui*.

After I had emphatically represented this to Colonel Guyon, I ordered his division back into the places lying nearest to the road toward Lévenecz, that it might the more speedily be supported by the Kmety division, stationed in Lévenecz in the event of a hostile attack, perhaps even in the course of the day, being made upon their cantonment.

The principal object of our operations, commenced from Waizen was, as I had already indicated in my proclamation, *to act on the offensive against the hostile corps under Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich, and especially to relieve the fort of Leopoldstadt on the Waag, blockaded by him.*

The first intimation I had of the untenableness of this fort—even against a mere bombardment—was when I was in Raab, and when it was already too late to withdraw its garrison and

armament without danger. This had now to be done after all, if possible, by the relief of the fort.

Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich's hostile operations in my rear—although we had expected something of the kind, nay, by our eccentric retreat from the capitals had, as has been mentioned, fully calculated on it—rendered my offensive against Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich an undertaking attended with great risk.

Nevertheless I persisted in its execution, until at length the well-founded representations of the new chief of my general staff—appointed in the stead of Lieut.-colonel (formerly Major) Pusztelnik, who was unfit for this post—succeeded in deciding me to choose another object for my operations.

He urged me to consider :

That the leading idea of our march toward the north, namely, "*the diversion of the hostile main forces from the Theiss, so as to render possible the organization of new troops behind that river,*" presupposed, as a fundamental consideration, the *preservation* of the corps d'armée.

That to effect both of these objects, we must restrict ourselves to mere demonstrations, and avoid any actual combat that would endanger the existence of the corps.

That should we, in the end, not succeed in relieving Leopoldstadt ; being surrounded on the north, east, and west by hostile corps who were confident of victory, we should be forced to retreat toward the south, to the fortress of Komorn, or to fight our way between Gran (Esztergom) and Komorn to the right bank of the Danube. But in the first of these cases we ran the risk of discouraging the garrison of this, the most important bulwark in the country, far more than it would have been by the closest investment ; while in the latter case we should, in addition, expose our own corps to the greatest danger.

That, consequently, the injurious results of a failure in the attempt to relieve Leopoldstadt bore a striking disproportion to the advantages which could result to us, even under the most favorable circumstances, from its successful deliverance.

That, from the position just taken up by the hostile forces, the relief of Leopoldstadt was almost without any further influence.

That this relief, according to the intention of the *leading idea* of our march toward the north, was to be nothing else than the



commencement of *those* demonstrations by which we hoped "*to divert the hostile main army from the Theiss.*"

That the deliverance of the garrison of Leopoldstadt, and the reinforcement of our corps d'armée thereby, was only a secondary aim—a welcome addition, as it were, to the advantages which our cause would derive from the realization of *this idea*.

*But this idea*—the chief of my general staff argued farther—*was already realized*, the enemy having fallen into the snare *even earlier* than, *without under-estimating him*, we could have expected.

The moment of greatest danger for our cause was fortunately gone by ; for a hostile offensive from Pesth against Debreczin was scarcely any longer to be feared, now that Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich had been sent on our track.

It was therefore impossible for me not to perceive that our next operations must now be directed solely to the deliverance of the corps d'armée from a position which was already critical enough to endanger its very existence. To effect this, even the garrison of the fort of Leopoldstadt must be sacrificed, if necessary. However great this sacrifice might appear, any attempt to save the garrison was connected with still greater disadvantages. The line of the retreat into the mountain-towns was still open to us for the next twenty-four hours ; but not after the expiration of that time. The rigor of the season augmented the hardships of the war—carried on now by us under the most unfavorable circumstances—to such a degree, that they of themselves were sufficient to destroy our troops even without direct co-operation on the part of the enemy. Some days' rest seemed to him to have now become of the most urgent importance in reference to the existence of the corps d'armée. A great part of it was but very imperfectly clad. The supplies of cloth, leather, and linen, which we had discovered, and taken with us, at the last moment, when marching out from Waizen, might perhaps be sufficient to remedy this deficiency. But of this stock of cloth, leather, and linen, garments had previously to be made. This, however, could not be accomplished while on the march. For this purpose several days' rest was necessary. This would be secured to us by the immediate occupation of the mountain-towns, and moreover an important part also of our line of retreat toward the upper Theiss.

*Consequently he could by no means approve of the offensive*

against Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich, and proposed the RETREAT SIDEWAYS INTO THE DISTRICT OF THE MOUNTAIN-TOWNS.

More brilliant, more alluring—he said finally—might appear to me the deliverance of Leopoldstadt; more favorable perhaps to my renown, if it succeeded; but to avoid any critical conflicts seemed to him at present nevertheless more judicious, even if we thereby repeatedly exposed ourselves to the suspicion of faint-heartedness. If the affairs of Hungary were still as *bad as they were a fortnight ago*, he would not advise a retreat. But they were now—he said—*already incomparably better*, thanks to the blindness of the enemy! *The uninterrupted continuation of the offensive against Debreczin might have destroyed at one blow the sinews of our resistance.* But, as it seemed, Prince Windischgrätz preferred to prepare for us a lingering, torturing death. What have we to do now? *Let us continue to give him the opportunity of trifling away, in these preparations, more time and strength:* THE NATION WILL PROBABLY RECOVER IN THE MEANWHILE FROM ITS FIRST PANIC TERROR.

I could not deny the correctness of these opinions, and gave up the offensive against Field-marshal Simunich, though not without inward reluctance.

This reluctance sprang from the painful thought of abandoning the garrison of Leopoldstadt to certain destruction, among whom also were two men, who having been my intimate friends in early days, remained still dear to me.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

By the “district of the mountain-towns” is here to be understood, without regard to political divisions, that tract of land in the valley of the river Gran, which includes especially the towns of Schemnitz (Selmeczbánya), Kremnitz (Körmöczbánya), Altsohl (O-Zólyom), and Neusohl (Beszterczebánya).

The Gran (Garam) flows through this district from Neusohl to Heiligenkreuz (Szentkereszt) almost at a right angle, turning from the western direction in which it reaches Neusohl suddenly

to the south, and at Altsohl bends again just as suddenly to the west, at Heiligenkreuz first resuming the new-shaped direction of its course from the source to the mouth.

The lofty boundaries of the valley of the Gran, partly covered with forests, partly rocky, to the south as well as to the north, can, so far as they limit the district just named, be traversed with artillery only at detached points; while an offensive advance with strong columns from the south into the valley itself appears to be hazardous on account of the frequent crossing of the road from one bank of the river to the other, with the dangerous proximity of a hostile cantonment in and around Schemnitz.

Two main roads, leading from the south into the district of the mountain-towns, meet at Schemnitz, one from Ipolyság by Némethi, the other from Lèvenz by Frauenmarkt (Báth). There exists, besides, another western by-road, which, near Zsarnóck and by Hodrics, joins Schemnitz with the road that likewise leads from the south upward into the valley of the Gran.

The other approaches from the south into the district of the mountain-towns conduct to Altsohl, having previously united into one road two or three (German) miles before reaching this town.

Across the northern boundaries of the valley of the Gran two roads lead out of the valley of the Túróc from Mosóc into the territory of the mountain-towns; on the one side by Tursek to Kremnitz, on the other by Hermanecz to Neusohl; and a third out of the upper valley of the Vág from Rosenberg, across the mountain of Sturecz, likewise to Neusohl.

Further, a fourth line of communication leads out of the valley of the Neutra from Privigye to Kremnitz.

Neusohl and Kremnitz were at that time menaced only from the valley of the Túróc, and this by the hostile brigade of Major-general Götz and his allies the Slavonian militia; but the above-mentioned approaches were easy to defend, and, as well as the valleys of the upper Waag and Gran, were still in our possession.

The southern mountain-towns, Altsohl and Schemnitz, appeared to be more seriously menaced than the two northern ones, especially Schemnitz, it being exposed to attack from three sides at the same time.



But innumerable difficulties awaited the aggressor, by reason of the extremely rigorous winter, and the deep snow on the mountains: and the chief of my general staff could therefore really predict with much probability, that we should be able to maintain ourselves in the mountain-towns easily until our troops should have recovered themselves.

The position of our corps d'armée on the evening of the 11th of January 1849 was, as before mentioned, the following:

The division of the left wing in Komjáthi, on the river Neutra.

The Aulich division in Verebély, on the river Zsitva.

The Kmety division in Lévenecz, on the left bank of the river Gran.

The Guyon division in Varsány, on the road from Ipolyság to Lévenecz.

Before us, in Neutra (Nyitra), on the river of the same name, stood a part of the hostile corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich; in our rear, in Ipolyság, that of Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich.

Schemnitz, the next to our position and at the same time most important point for us of the mountain-towns, was consequently nearer to us than to the two hostile corps; the road from Lévenecz to Schemnitz could not be endangered by either of them so long as we were posted as above indicated: nevertheless it was possible, if we delayed any longer in Lévenecz, that Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich might reach this point before us, if he had started early on the 11th from Ipolyság, by Némethi, toward Schemnitz, advancing onward in the valley of the Schemnitz-Bach. In fact, on the evening of the 11th we were informed by a scout, that a hostile column had been seen in the course of the day marching along the road from Ipolyság to Schemnitz; its strength, however, was not indicated more precisely.

For the purpose of again getting the start of this column, the Kmety division had to set out during the night between the 11th and 12th of January from Lévenecz, by Frauenmarkt, toward Schemnitz.

The Aulich division left Verebély on the 12th, and took its route by St. Benedict (Szent Benedek) and Heiligenkreuz to Kremnitz.

The division of the left wing, leaving Komjáthi likewise on the 12th, should follow it as far as Heiligenkreuz; but from

thence march to Altsohl, occupy this place, and advance its outposts immediately toward the south as far as Dobronyiva (Dobrona).

During the course of the 12th, in order to protect these operations, the Guyon division should oppose to the uttermost the advance beyond Lévenecz of Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich.

Being forced to suppose that there was an *OFFENSIVE understanding* between the movements of the two hostile corps, which menaced us in front and rear, there remained, notwithstanding all the circumspection of the chief of my general staff, reason enough to apprehend, on the one hand, that we should find Schemnitz already occupied by the enemy, and on the other, see the division of our left wing destroyed.

Fortunately, however, there existed only an "*observing*" understanding between the two hostile corps; and thus it became possible for us to lead the corps d'armée "of the upper Danube" without accident into the district of the mountain-towns.

The Kmety division, together with my head-quarters, reached Frauenmarkt during the night between the 11th and 12th. From hence a small column of infantry with two guns was dispatched without delay across the mountains to Prinzdorf (Prensfalu), on the road to Némethi, with directions to turn to the south immediately after reaching that point, to occupy the narrow valley of Teplicska, and to send out patrols as far as Némethi. The main body of the Kmety division continued, likewise during the night, its march to Schemnitz, and arrived thither early in the afternoon of the 12th, while almost at the same moment some lancers of the corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Csorich were taken prisoners in Némethi by the patrols of the Prinzdorf column.

On the 15th of January the divisions stood thus :

The Aulich division in Kremnitz, with the outposts to the north in Perk, to the south and west in Heiligenkreuz.

The Kmety division in Neusohl, with the outposts toward the northwest in Hermanecz.

The division of the left wing in Altsohl, with the outposts toward the south in Dobronyiva, toward the southeast in Szalatna; and

The Guyon division in Schemnitz and Windschacht, with the outposts toward the south, on the road to Lévenecz.

For the protection of both flanks of the Guyon division, Princzdorf and Teplicska, on the road to Némethi, continued to be occupied by a detachment of the Kmety division; and Zsarnócz, westward from Schemnitz, in the valley of the Gran, on the road to St. Benedict, by a part of the Aulich division.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE troops on their march had found the communications into the mountain-towns partly covered with ice, partly blocked up with snow, and only with great exertions had they been able to advance. The same obstacles could not but make it appear doubtful whether there would be any hostile attack against the mountain-towns for a considerable time. But scarcely had the divisions entered their presumptive winter-quarters when a thaw came on, and smoothed for the enemy the roads which ice and snow had made so very difficult for us.

It is true that Colonel Aulich, soon after his arrival in Kremnitz, had by repeated forced reconnoiterings toward Turcsek on the road from Kremnitz to Mosócz so energetically frustrated the attacks intended by the brigade of Major-general Götz and the Slavonian free-troops, that we could not in future be molested from this side; but the danger menaced more seriously in the south.

The corresponding news received from scouts announced the approach of considerable hostile forces on the roads from Frauenmarkt and St. Benedict.

The detachment in Zsarnócz, which ought to have yielded only to a superior hostile attack, abandoned this position; whether through ignorance or cowardice on the part of the commander could not be ascertained.

Zsarnócz had again to be occupied by us, in order to secure Schemnitz, in case of a hostile attack on the road to Frauenmarkt. The Guyon division, however, could not be further weakened by detaching any part of its troops. Consequently the Aulich division received an order to occupy Zsarnócz again



with a battalion of infantry. The commander of the battalion dispatched for this purpose, while on his march from Heiligenkreuz toward Zsarnócz, heard it rumored that the enemy was already in possession of the place, and turned immediately to the "right about," because his orders happened to say nothing about "attacking," and also made no mention of the possibility of the enemy's being in Zsarnócz.

On the 20th of January, when in Neusohl, I received intelligence of this unwelcome incident, and hastened the same night to Kremnitz, to lead in person a column from thence to Zsarnócz.

On the evening of the 21st of January I had reached it with a battalion of the foot-regiment Alexander, a squadron of the ninth regiment of hussars, and a three-pounder battery of six pieces. The hostile Colonel Collery, by advancing from the south upward along the valley of the Gran, had arrived at Zsarnócz the day before with the twelfth battalion of chasseurs, some cavalry, and about half a rocket-battery, but early in the morning of the 21st of January had continued his march by Hodries toward Schemnitz.

By the attack which it was to be foreseen the hostile turning-column would make on the following day, the Guyon division could easily be forced to abandon its position near Windschacht, and as a consequence even Schemnitz.

To frustrate this I resolved to march after Colonel Collery and attack him in his rear.

Colonel Guyon was informed of this project during the night between the 21st and 22d of January, and ordered on his part to anticipate the attack of the enemy's turning-column.

The road from Zsarnóck to Schemnitz leads, as has been said, by Hodries, in a narrow valley, ascending to the northern thickly-wooded bank, at first gently in the bottom of the valley, but above the last-named place rather steeply. Here the road had been made impracticable in several places by natural abatis, which so far as was absolutely necessary were manned by us, but only with volunteers, and more for observation than for defense.

When I broke up very early on the 22d of January from Zsarnócz toward Hodries, I hoped to find the enemy still delayed by the abatis, and occupied in removing them. I was, however,

soon informed that he had succeeded in overcoming all these hindrances during the course of the preceding night.

From Hodrics I despatched strong patrols in a southeastern direction, partly to harass likewise the enemy posted before Windschacht, partly to give intelligence to the Guyon division of our approach, which I always presumed to be still in its position before Windschacht.

Higher up than those parts of the road on which the remains of the removed abatis were still to be seen, we encountered the enemy. He had occupied the declivity of the mountain above the road with sharp-shooters on a point favorable for commanding the road.

I ordered a company on to the height of the wooded mountain-side, to eject the hostile sharp-shooters, or at least divide their fire, and thus facilitate the advance of a storming-column of infantry along the road.

Lieutenant-colonel Pusztelnik—a short time before, as has been mentioned, the chief of my general staff, but now commander of the brigade to which belonged the battalion of the foot-regiment Alexander engaged in this attack—had voluntarily joined this expedition, and undertook in person the command of the company sent on to the height.

In case the storm on the road should be repulsed, I ordered two guns to advance and be unlimbered : intending by their fire to stop the pursuing enemy, and protect our preparations for a renewed attack. The rest of the battery remained with the rear-guard, as did also the greater part of the cavalry.

Several hussars had voluntarily galloped along that part of the road which the fire of the enemy commanded, but were received with such a brisk volley of musketry, that they were forced to turn back as quickly as possible. This of itself sufficed to discourage the infantry, among whom was a very large number of recruits. Nevertheless our sharp-shooters on the declivity meanwhile opened their fire ; and now I believed the moment had arrived for advancing the storming-column on the main-road. But after the first hostile shots, it turned back ; and there was the less chance of stopping it, as the enemy itself sent forward along the road a small division of chasseurs with crossed bayonets.

A panic terror seized the infantry and the cannoneers of the

two unlimbered guns. They turned in disgraceful flight. The hussars would have barred their passage, but they crawled away under the horses, although the horsemen kept slashing at them with their swords. In the dreadful confusion thereby produced, the artillery-horses took fright; and of the rest of the battery, except one piece, part tumbled down the declivity, part could not at all be got again under way.

The commander of the battery, struck by a ball from the enemy, had fallen near the two unlimbered guns; while his men, leaving their pieces behind them, ran away with the implements necessary for loading.

During my fruitless efforts to keep the most courageous of the infantry together for the protection of these guns, I was myself forced back by degrees to the place where they had been planted. Some balls whistling past us in rapid succession caused me soon to be left completely alone. Even my adjutant, an intrepid valorous man, had disappeared. As, however, I had not seen him fall, his absence gave me some ground of hope; for I was convinced he had left me only for the purpose of stopping, if possible, the fugitives farther behind, and rallying them for another attack. Nevertheless I saw that with such troops victory was absolutely impossible, though I hoped at least to be able to save the artillery. I was therefore constrained to remain where I was, although alone.

Close to the guns stood an ammunition-cart placed athwart the road. Behind it I sought meanwhile a partial shelter from the enemy's balls.

The noise of my troops fleeing toward the valley now scarcely reached my ears; but in its stead I distinguished from the opposite direction confused shouts, and at intervals the sounds of the Austrian popular hymn. Next moment the storming hostile chasseurs broke forth from the last turn of the road. This staggered me too. Undecided whether I should yield to the natural instinct that urged me to save myself, or, in despair at the humiliation I had suffered, await the thrust of the hostile bayonets, I looked at one time in the direction of my fleeing troops, and then toward the advancing enemy. Suddenly it seemed to me as if they wavered at the sight of the guns, as if the "Hurrah!" died on their lips. With prompt decision I searched for the match. But whether it was that I overlooked it, or that the fugitive



gunners had taken even this with them, I did not find it—and thereby completely discouraged, I also now took to flight.

I was on foot—my preservation therefore extremely improbable. I had thought of this too late. I now sought to escape the searching looks of the pursuing enemy by leaping onward to the wooded slopes, for the purpose of gaining ground unobserved among the trees; but stumbling at almost every leap, I was obliged immediately to come down again to the open road.

The hostile chasseurs were already close enough behind me to take sure aim; which they indeed did; but the road being much inclined, I fortunately sank at every step under the line of sight, and thus my shako received a ball, which was probably destined for my skull; all the others whistled harmlessly past me. The brave chasseurs evidently shot rather too eagerly. With some what more coolness in their aim, they might have spared both themselves and their commander-in-chief much trouble next spring.

However, I meanwhile did my best to shorten as much as possible the time during which I had to serve them as a walking target.

A cavalry horse without a rider, coming from the side of the enemy, galloped suddenly past me. About a hundred paces from me a hussar stopped it for his wounded dismounted comrade, whom he would not abandon in spite of the danger to his own life. After he had assisted him to escape, he accidentally caught sight of me, rode speedily toward me, and offered me his own horse, with the remark, that his life was of less value than mine.

This magnanimity had an altogether peculiar effect on me. I suddenly believed that the day need not yet be given up for lost. "You had better gallop after these scamps of infantry, and bring some back to me; but they must be such fellows as you!" I impetuously called to the heroic hussar. "All is in vain!" replied he, with an oath; "they are Sclavonians, not Magyars!"

This observation on their nationality was certainly just, but the conclusion deduced from it not quite correct; for the coward cannoneers were Magyars, not Sclavonians. Moreover, the next moment seemed as if it would give the hussar the lie even in regard to the Sclavonians; for scarcely had he finished his swearing, when round the next projection behind which the road loses

itself downward, a column of infantry, led by my adjutant, arrived swiftly for my deliverance.

I had not been deceived in the adjutant. My newly roused determination not yet to give up the contest now ripened more quickly into action. "Follow me!" I called to them, they appearing very resolute; "your comrades will not remain behind, when they know that we are again advancing. This brave hussar," I confidently added, "will take care of that; will you not, comrade?"—and without stopping for an answer, I again advanced up to the mountain. The Slavonians probably understood very little of what I shouted to them in Hungarian; however, they followed fearlessly.

The enemy's fire now grew more animated: we had no time to return it. I felt continually urged to address my men. He who, himself in danger, inspires others with courage, most strengthens his own.

"Follow me!" I repeatedly called out; "you see they hit nothing!" But unfortunately just then a ball did hit; a man in the first rank fell moaning to the ground; and in a twinkling the rest had again taken to flight.

The *sudden* extinction of a last hope, that has unexpectedly emerged—even though it may be but a foolish one—shakes more vehemently than the *gradual* disappointment of all previous well-founded expectations.

"It is all over for to-day!" cried the adjutant. "Forever!" I added, in despair.

When I retired from the guns, I had already given up the day for lost, just as much as now; but the knowledge of this disgraceful necessity had not there, as here, been forced upon me all at once. *There* I still had regard to my own safety; *here* I renounced it.

This desperate indifference must also in part be attributed to the unusual relaxation of my physical powers. On the summit of moral enthusiasm death is sought—in the depth of physical exhaustion it is no longer avoided. The simultaneous coincidence of both conditions in one and the same individual appears to me impossible. Only in the intermediate phases can either valor or cowardice be spoken of.

"Let us save ourselves, before it be too late!" called out my adjutant, seized me by the arm, and dragged me away with him

down hill. The hussar also—(he had been right this time with regard to the Slavonians)—rode again up to me, and once more invited me to mount his horse. Irritated at this request, and angry at the annoyance of being dragged along, I endeavored to disengage my arm from the adjutant; but he would not let go, even when a ball from the enemy passing between us had almost lamed the elbow of the arm with which he held me: whereupon perceiving that, by a further opposition on my part, not only my own life, but the lives of my two faithful companions also, would be endangered, I immediately began again voluntarily to take part in the flight, and exert my last physical powers.

In the vicinity of the uppermost houses of Hodrics stood a carriage for the severely wounded; but these had one and all been made prisoners of war. I could therefore avail myself of the carriage without scruple in order to overtake my troops. Not till I reached the lower part of the village did I succeed in coming up with them.

Here I found the hussars still endeavoring to drive together the dispersed infantry. It was a humiliating spectacle; but far more humiliating was the thought that I was the commander of such a troop; and the boldest imagination, after such events, would have been baffled in its attempt to discover within the bounds of probability the elements of the subsequent necessity for a Russian intervention in Hungary in favor of "independent united Austria."

I intended then and there to decimate the infantry and the servers of the lost guns; but a glance at the thinned ranks told me that they were already more than decimated.

Our loss amounted, besides the five guns and some hussars, to almost two companies of infantry. Lieutenant-colonel Pusztelnik was also missing. He had been wounded and taken prisoner, as we learnt afterward.

The enemy did not pursue us further; so that our march back from Hodrics to Zsarnócz could at least be performed in order.

Here I gave a short rest to the troops; but I felt myself irresistibly impelled further on, the sooner to obtain full certainty as to the fate of the Guyon division.

That it must have simultaneously suffered a defeat was beyond a doubt.

But these questions urgently demanded an answer: whither



and how far it had been forced back?—whether, in its first fright, it had not even perhaps receded as far as Neusohl, and thus made it possible for the enemy, swiftly following in its track, to cut off on the one hand the division in Altsohl, on the other that in Kremnitz, from each other and from the remaining two in Neusohl; and thereby divide my corps d'armée into three parts, and destroy them separately?

This nobody in Zsarnócz could give me. The dispositions for the Aulich division had also to be issued in the course of the next night, nay even partly executed. Accompanied by my adjutant, I accordingly hastened forward in a carriage to Kremnitz.

I had been warned in Zsarnócz not to travel without a strong escort, because a hostile division from Hodrics, across the northern ridge of the mountain, could long ago have reached the road from Zsarnócz to Heiligenkreuz, and I had to take this route. I paid no attention, however, to the warning.

Not far from the place which had been pointed out as dangerous to my safety, a menacing “Halt! who goes there?” in German, interrupted the course of the horses; and next moment our carriage was surrounded by foot-soldiers with white straps. The challenge in German and the white straps made us suspicious. My adjutant would not immediately produce the colors. “A general,” he answered, delaying; and “Of what battalion are you?” he asked, in return, harshly, at the same time leaning out over the carriage, that he might discover, in spite of the darkness, some more distinct mark among the soldiers. “Never mind about the battalion!—what general?” was the answer, accompanied by a closer advance of the soldiers to the carriage.

Our situation was not pleasant. We were now obliged to explain. If it should be followed by a hostile declaration, we could be saved, perchance, only by a shot at the importunate questioner, a jump on to the coach-box, and a lusty lash at the horses.

I had soon considered this; and rising by degrees from my seat, seized a pistol, noiselessly cocked it, and thus awaited, ready for the leap, with suppressed breathing, what should happen.

Meanwhile, my companion still delayed with the information. Continually endeavoring to recognize before we should be recognized, he leant forward still more over the carriage-door toward

the soldiers, who had come quite close. The short pause seemed to me an eternity. I thought I could scarcely wait longer for the moment of decision.

"It is Alexander infantry!" the adjutant at last called out, and gave the desired information without more ado; for he had recognized a sergeant of the troop, to whom he remembered having given in person a certain order on the morning before the disastrous conflict. The Alexander infantry at that time still wore white straps. This circumstance, however, had not occurred to either of us in the first moment of surprise, any more than that the chasseurs who had been opposed to us at Hodrics had black straps.

This sergeant, together with the small number of men now distributed round our carriage, was the remains of the company I had sent from Hodrics, during our advance, as a reconnoitering patrol, toward Windschacht. It had been suddenly attacked on all sides, while marching through the forest, and the greater part of it taken prisoners. Only these few succeeded in cutting their way through rearward, and passing Hodrics where the footpath leads from the southern declivity across the little place to the northern ridge of the mountain; having previously awaited, in a hiding-place hard by, the marching past of a hostile patrol, which was observing our retreat to Zsarnócz. Unmolested, they then reached; after crossing the above-mentioned ridge of the mountain, the road from Zsarnócz to Heiligenkreuz; and were just on the point of joining their battalion in Zsarnócz when they met us.

I directed them to wait where they were for their battalion, which was on its march back; and then continued my journey to Kremnitz without further interruption.

## CHAPTER XIX.

IN Kremnitz I found already authentic news of Colonel Guyon, which unfortunately confirmed almost all my apprehensions. He had been defeated on the preceding day, the 21st of January, at Windschacht, and obliged to retreat to Schemnitz. On the following night he received my order to attack the hostile turning-column. This he attempted to do next morning; but his men—like mine at Hodrics—made off as soon as the enemy's first shots had been fired. Meanwhile he was forced by the attack directed against him from Windschacht to evacuate Schemnitz also; nay, the depression of his troops compelled him even to cross the Gran near Breznicska, and fall back as far as Búcsa.

The junction of the Aulich division with the other divisions on the road leading through the valley of the Gran seemed now, as I had feared, to be impossible. For this road formed at several points, quite close to the right bank of the river Gran, narrow defiles, open toward the left bank. But I had little reason to suppose that an enemy, who was not deterred from carrying out his operations by the necessity for such daring marches as Colonel Collery's recent one from the lower valley of the Gran by Zsarnóc and Hodrics toward Schemnitz, would leave unoccupied the left bank of the Gran, opposite the just-mentioned points—very unfavorable for the march of the Aulich division through the valley of the Gran—as he had already obtained, in consequence of Colonel Guyon's hasty retreat to Búcsa, undisturbed possession of the left bank of the Gran along this road.

To effect a junction of the Aulich division with the main body of the corps d'armée in the north of Neusohl—through the valley of the little river Túrócz, by Perk, Turcsek, Stuben toward Mosóc, and then, turning to the right, Cseremosne, Bartoska, and the mountain Hermanecz—seemed, if possible, still more dangerous, an account of Major-general Götz's menacing position upon this line, and the unfavorable disposition of the inhabitants of this district toward us.



There was consequently nothing left for us but to make use of the precarious road across the mountain-ridge between Kremnitz and Neusohl, even at the risk of losing a part of the baggage and artillery.

From Kremnitz, as well as from Neusohl, steep forest-paths lead close under the highest point of the mountain chain; and the path here is formed by a rocky ridge, which can be crossed only by a single foot-passenger at a time. The inhabitants of the mountain declivities use these paths, as we were assured, only occasionally during the winter, and then with light sledges, in such a manner that, when arrived below the ridge, they unload them, take them to pieces, drag every thing, one by one, over the ridge to the opposite continuation of the path, there put the sledges together again, and seated upon them slide down with their freight to the place of their destination.

For the purpose of rendering possible the use of this communication, already sufficiently difficult on account of its steepness, independently of that fatal impediment, an opening had once been made through the rocky ridge at the narrowest part of its base; but this tunnel *en miniature* had since, bit by bit, fallen in again.

We had consequently to clear it out, and considerably enlarge large it, so as to be able to pass through it with our artillery.

This was accomplished on the 24th of January; and during the following night the Aulich division also passed through the tunnel, in both cases not without excessive exertions on the part of the troops.

But in the meantime the Guyon division and that of the left wing were threatened with the unforeseen danger of being separated from the main body of the army, and destroyed while isolated.

In the same night on which the Aulich division had effected its difficult march over the Szkalka (the name, I believe, of the short spur which, extending from the spot where the rivers Gran and Waag branch off in a southeastern direction between the mountain-towns Neusohl and Kremnitz, is terminated by the Laurinberg), so rapid a thaw once more suddenly set in, that the Gran, overflowing its banks by the next morning, inundated the roads between Neusohl, Altsohl, and Búcsa, to the height of several feet. The divisions in Altsohl and Búcsa were thereby

not only completely isolated from the main body in Neusohl, but even from each other ; and their situation seemed incomparably more dangerous than that of the Aulich division had recently been, principally because, on the one hand, to my knowledge, no obstacle stood in the way of the victorious enemy in Schemnitz, which could have prevented him from attacking the Guyon division at Búcsa with superior forces, and destroying it utterly, or immediately taking it all prisoners, since Guyon's retreat to Altsohl or Neusohl through the inundated ground was impossible ; —on the other hand, because during the last few days repeated reports had arrived from the division in Altsohl, that numerous patrols of cavalry were advancing more and more boldly from Karpfen (Karpona) toward Altsohl, and these must be considered as the precursors of an attack soon to be expected from this direction likewise.

A speedy decrease of the hemmed-in waters was not at all to be expected, in consequence of the heaped-up masses of ice which stopped the course of the Gran ; and any attempt to wade through the deluged expanses of the roads, threatened—so the inhabitants of that district asseverated—certain destruction to the troops.

The loss of a part of my corps appeared at this time inevitable ; for neither from Búcsa nor from Altsohl did there exist even a barely practicable road to Neusohl, on which a circuit might have been made round the fatal inundation.

We owed our deliverance from this desperate situation, strangely enough, to the effects of a tragi-comical event which happened on the 22d of January—consequently before the inundation—to the Guyon division in Búcsa, immediately after its retreat from Schemnitz.

Colonel Guyon—void alike of fear and of penetration as he always was—had scarcely arrived in Búcsa with his defeated division, exhausted by its march, when he resolved, after a short rest, to set out again toward Schemnitz, that he might take immediate revenge on the victors of the day. Now as his soldiers were utterly destitute of the military ardor necessary for the accomplishment of this project, he thought to impart it by means of brandy ; this made them drunk, however, rather than eager for combat. Moreover, discipline, never the strongest feature in the Guyon division, had soon fallen so very low, that even the

daily false alarm, "The enemy is approaching!" was sufficient to create such a confusion in the camp, as could scarcely have been exceeded after a total defeat. The most terrified ran back as far as Neusohl. The dispersed divisions, however, by degrees again assembled in Búscá : but the dread of an attack had once taken possession of them ; it mounted afterward with the waters of the Gran, and became at last stronger than the fear of being drowned. Only in this way was it possible for Colonel Guyon to attempt the retreat by the deeply-inundated roads : and the success of his hazardous enterprise brought suspicion on the inhabitants of the district of having represented the dangers connected with it as so formidable from treacherous hostility toward us.

The division in Altsohl had far greater difficulties to contend with in a similar attempt. It had to cross the river itself, by means of the overflowed bridge, and where the stream was very rapid ; its road also lay considerably deeper under water. But the example of the Guyon division had its effect : and some hours later the whole of the four divisions of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube were assembled at Neusohl.

We afterward learned, it is true, that we might quite comfortably have awaited the subsiding of the waters ; for the hostile brigade of Major-general Wiess, by which we supposed Altsohl to be menaced, had been suddenly drawn back toward Pesth ; and the victors at Windschacht, Hodries, and Schemnitz believed themselves too feeble for further attacks, nay even expected to be attacked by us. But we had no suspicion whatever of all this ; although it by no means seldom happens that mutual fears are entertained on both sides, and often without reason on either part.

We should, however, not have been able to protract our stay in the mountain-towns, even had we been informed of these circumstances early enough. For the really irresistible enemy who drove us out of them was hunger ; the thaw having made the roads to the southern comitates, whence we had to obtain our provisions, impassable, and thus the transport from thence of corn for a long time was impossible.

Directly after my arrival in Schemnitz I received an order from the war-minister Mészáros to begin my march back toward the upper Theiss without delay, and to act against Field-marshal Lieutenant Count Schlick, in concert with the then Colonel



Klapka, who, in the stead of the war-minister, had just taken the command of the latter's corps, which had been repeatedly miserably defeated by Count Schlick. I was to attack the Schlick corps from the southwest, while Klapka intended to assail it from the south.

The same reasons which had decided me when in Lévenecz to adopt the side-march to the mountain-towns had in Schemnitz made me resolve not to obey at present the above order of the minister of war: for I could not hesitate to estimate the disadvantages which might arise to the country from this disobedience, only very low in comparison with those which must have been the inevitable consequence of the anticipated destruction of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube.

After the unexpected success in concentrating the corps d'armée in Neusohl, circumstances were quite changed, and instead of justifying a continued disobedience to this order, urged me, on the contrary, no longer to delay the commencement of the retreat to the upper Theiss.

The question now was, not *whether*, but *how* this retreat should be accomplished.

Only *two* ways were at that time open to us from Neusohl: *either* through the valley of the upper Gran as far as Vöröskő, from thence across the southern limits of the district of the Gran valley into the Murány valley and that of the little river Iólsva, then by Tornalja, Putnok, into the supposed circuit of the operations of Klapka's corps; *or* through the Zips (Szepes megye), the Sáros, and Abanjvár comitates.

On the *first* line a hostile conflict was *highly probable*, on the latter it was *certain*, and moreover with the dreaded victorious corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick, which just then occupied these comitates.

In spite of this, however, we chose the latter route, because on the former we had to fear, in consequence of the continuance of mild weather, impassable roads, and at Tornalja hostile attacks from two opposite directions even during our march; because, informed in time of our movement, the corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick, or, at all events, a part of it—from Kaschau (Kassa) along the road from Torna, on the one hand, and the brigade of Major-general Wiess, which we then supposed to be already near Altsohl, by Vámosfalva (Milná), Zelene, and

Rimaszombat, on the other—could reach Tornalja long before us, and either await us ready for combat, or fall upon us even during our march.

On the route through the Zips, on the contrary, we could reckon, even with continued thaw, if not upon good yet upon firm roads ; were ourselves *the assailants* ; and had not to fear any unexpected attack in the flanks or the rear during our whole march ; since, according to what we then believed to be the position of the hostile forces, we could neither be overtaken on that route, nor by the forced march of any hostile corps on another route could we lose the start which we had already gained, and which we just then most urgently wanted to enable us deliberately to prepare our attacks on the corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick, and to execute them undisturbed in flank and rear.

In consequence, the following plan of retreat was projected : The Hungarian corps d'armée of the upper Danube to begin its retreat from Neusohl toward the upper Theiss, through the Zips, in two columns of equal strength. One, composed of the Guyon division and that of the left wing, to move through the valley of the Gran, then by Pohorella, Vernár, Sztraczena, and Huta, to Igló ; the other, formed by the Aulich and Kmety divisions, to march, after having passed over the ground between the Waag and the Gran, through the valley of the upper Waag into that of the Poprád, and then by Donnersmark (Csötörtökhely) to Leutschau (Löcse).

The successful attainment of the two last-specified objects of the march must absolutely precede any idea of a serious offensive against the corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick.

The southern column, which had to proceed through the valley of the Gran, received for rear-guard a train of several hundred wagons, laden with stores of various kinds belonging to the state, among which were supplies of military clothing, a movable musket-manufactory, a stock of sugar and coffee, tin, copper, materials for muskets, and so on. These were mostly things ordered by the Committee of Defense, which we found prepared in different places on our march from Waizen to Schemnitz, partly already on the way to the capitals, which were now occupied by the enemy, partly only ready to be sent thither ; and made them accompany our movements, that they might arrive as safely as possible at the new seat of the government.

To do more for the protection of a train of wagons, which had grown to an unusual length, seemed, however, to be a too exhausting service for the troops, who were besides already excessively harassed by the retreat in forced marches; and as I would not send it in advance, because the most insignificant hostile rumor coming from the point whither we were retreating would have caused it to stop, and thus have interrupted in their march the divisions behind it—the wagons had to follow the troops as they best could.

These stores would, it is true, fall a certain prey to the enemy, if it occurred to him to pursue our southern column; but then he had also to remove out of his way the whole train before he could overtake the divisions, which would be already two days' march in advance of him; and the commander of the small detachment accompanying the train—not indeed to defend it, but only to maintain order in its transport—had been charged to abandon to the enemy the booty only piecemeal, where practicable, and thereby, as well as by frequently barricading the road with wagons, and finally by carrying with him or destroying the draught-horses, render pursuit as difficult as possible.

The permanent advance which was secured to the southern column in consequence of the execution of these measures was important enough to indemnify us for the loss of the state's stores; for it must not be overlooked, that our retreat from the mountain-towns to the upper Theiss was at the same time an offensive movement against Count Schlick's corps, and that our principal aim had to be directed toward endeavoring not to be overtaken by the hostile brigades of Generals Götz and Prince Jablonowski, which came behind us before we had forced our march through the district in which Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick was operating at that time.

However, the enemy did not pursue the southern column, and the whole of the stores consequently remained at the disposal of the government.

A quantity of precious metal, partly coined, partly uncoined, which we had found in the mountain-towns, was to be conveyed for greater security under the protection of the *northern* column, and afterward handed over to the government. (This was accomplished from Kaschau.)

This plan of retreat was promptly put in execution.



On the 27th of January, 1849, the last troops of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube left the mountain-town Neusohl. My head-quarters marched with the northern column, and reached Rosenberg (Rózsahegy) on the 28th.

Here there arrived from the Zips a messenger—sent by Field-marshal Windischgrätz, as he said—who requested a secret conference with me.

This I granted him.

He assured me it was the desire of Field-marshal Windischgrätz that I should lead the corps d'armée of the upper Danube to his serene highness—this I did not for a moment doubt; and if I acceded to this desire, a full amnesty and a life free from care, though out of Austria, would be guaranteed to me—this also I did not doubt in the least. But when the messenger had finished, I nevertheless called into the room some staff-officers, communicated to them the object of the secret conference which had just taken place, and handed to the messenger a lithographed copy of my proclamation from Waizen, as the answer for HIM *who had sent him*, with the remark, that this was the ultimatum of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube and of its commander.

During our retreat from the Lajtha as far as Buda-Pesth, we had met, as has been mentioned, with but little sympathy on the part of the population; in the mountain-towns, and the comitates bordering on the north, the majority was disposed even *against* us; still the people remained generally passive, except a few tricolor demagogues, whose activity, however, had no other result than causing some individuals, renowned as black-and-yellow zealots, to be arrested by my orders in Schemnitz, transported to Neusohl, and there after some days again set at liberty. But a dozen obscure Sclavonian agitators were carried with us as prisoners from St. Nikolaus (Szent Miklós), and afterward sent to Debreczin.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE necessary orders having previously been given to the rear-guard for securing by a demonstration the march of the northern column against the hostile brigade of Major-general Götz, which was pressing on after us from the comitate of Túróc through that of Arva, and it having been likewise charged with the destruction of all the bridges in the valley of the Waag over which we had passed; the main body of the Schlick corps just then operating, though unsuccessfully, against Tokja, with the intention of forcing the passage over the Theiss at that place; both columns of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube could consequently easily and exactly execute the detailed orders given when in Neusohl for the whole march from the mountain-towns into the Zips, and on the 2d of February, 1849, they stood already—the southern column with its head, the Guyon division, in Igló in the valley of the Hernád, the northern at the same height with it in the valley of the Poprád.

Lieutschau was on that day still occupied by a feeble division of the Schlick corps. Colonel Guyon took no notice of it, and sent away his officers, who were awaiting his orders, with the soporific injunction that the next day should be a day of rest.

But a critical night had still to precede that following day. In its course the Guyon division in Igló was surprised by the hostile column of Leutschau, and lost a piece of artillery. The enemy himself, however, unwisely induced by the confusion which the surprise had caused in Guyon's camp to continue his attack longer than was advisable with his small forces, lost a part of his rocket-battery, whereupon he retreated hastily by Kirchdrauf (Szepes-Váralja) to the Branyiszkó, that saddle of the mountain-chain separating the comitates of Sáros and Zips, over which the shortest communication between Leutschau and Eperjes leads.

Although this sudden attack could not be called a successful one, on account of the sensible loss which the enemy had suffered, yet it furnished a proof of the spirit of warlike resolution which

distinguished the corps of Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick, and presaged hindrances to our further attempt at breaking through toward the upper Theiss ; the accomplishment of which we had to hasten so much the more, as the united hostile brigades of Generals Götze and Prince Jablonowski, with their allies the Slavonian militia, were pressing on after us in the valley of the Waag, being now only two days' march in our rear ; and as their attack on our rear, if combined with the simultaneous energetic opposition of the Schlick corps in our front, might very easily cause the ruin of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube.

There was, it is true, another expedient left us, by which it would have been possible to accomplish, without combat, the junction of our corps d'armée with that of Colonel Klapka, and then immediately attack Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick from the south and southwest—the original idea of the war-minister Mészáros. This expedient consisted in removing the corps d'armée into the valley of the little river Bodva, starting from Igló in two columns ; to be executed with the one by Rosenau (Rosnyó-bánya), Hárskut, Almás, Görgö, Torna to Moldau (Sepsi), and the other by Svedlér, Einsiedel (Remete), Stósz, Metzenseifen, to Jászó. But then the enemy would also have been more favorably situated for the junction of his forces, now separated by the corps d'armée of the upper Danube ; and the fame of the Schlick corps, which had so much influence on our troops, would have been still more dangerously increased.

The reasons which prevented us from adopting this plan were in fact mainly of a moral nature. They were the same which impelled us to force our way through the mountain-road over the Branyiszkó, while only demonstrations were made in the Hernád valley by Krompach and Kluknó ; the same reasons which determined me, in forcing this passage, to put in front those troops in which *the least confidence* could be placed.

In consequence of tittle-tattle exaggeration, the mountain-road across the Branyiszkó had gained the renown of being a defile, and moreover impregnable from the west. To force the Branyiszkó was at that time equivalent to taking the bull by the horns. But *this* was just the point to which I wished finally to bring my infantry, which, with the exception of only a few battalions, was not to be trusted.

The Guyon division consisted of infantry of the thirty-third



Honvéd battalion, which had been totally routed on the 21st of January at Windschacht; of the thirteenth Honvéd battalion, which had completely failed us on the following day, immediately after the first shot of the hostile chasseurs in the attack undertaken from Schemnitz against the turning-column of Colonel Coltery; furthermore, of a battalion of what were called pioneers, a platoon of Hungarian volunteer chasseurs, and two Honvéd battalions raised in Neusohl only a fortnight ago, consisting of quite raw recruits sent in by the rural districts. The thirty-third and thirteenth battalions, ever since the days of Windschacht and Schemnitz, remained, as may be conceived, in the odor of cowardice, and were ripe for decimation; the pioneers and Hungarian chasseurs, about thirty men strong, were for action still unknown quantities, because untried; but what could be expected from the fourteen-day soldiers of both the last-mentioned bodies of troops? The other three divisions had at least one or two tried battalions.

But the taking by storm of the Branyiszkó by *these last* would have produced only an insignificant sensation among the corps d'armée: for every one was convinced beforehand that these few good battalions always valorously did their duty in presence of the enemy. Nay, it was even to be feared that a victory gained by the *best* troops would support the fixed idea that this favorable result could have been obtained only by these very battalions. The more vivid their recollection of the defeats lately suffered, the more this would have caused the highly dangerous want of self-confidence to be felt by the less trusty divisions. In this way the trusty troops would have lost in numerical strength and the *un*trusty ones would have gained nothing; while, on the contrary, an insignificant victory gained by the *latter* must become to the whole corps d'armée a source of higher self-confidence, in comparison with which the perhaps greater numerical loss would appear hardly worthy of notice.

*Therefore* the Guyon division *alone* was sent on before to attack the hostile position on the Branyiszkó, while the division of the left wing, designed for the support of the former, had to remain in Kirchdrauf (Szepes-Váralja), and the Kmety division to make a demonstration on the road along the Hernád. The Aulich division remained in the valley of the Poprád to support the rear-guard, the head-quarters in Leutschau.

On the 5th of February, 1849, the Guyon division attacked the enemy in his position on the Branyiszkó; while the officers of the head-quarters and their column innocently arranged a *soirée dansante* in Leutschau for the night from the 5th to the 6th. Since our side-march from Lévenecz and Verebély into the district of the mountain-towns, where our situation began to be a critical one, I recommended to the divisions the employment of similar preservatives against that poor-sinner state of mind which only too easily gets hold of the officers of an isolated army seriously and continually menaced from all sides—as the corps d'armée of the upper Danube was at that time—and immediately seizing also on the men, guarantees victory to the enemy even before the battle has commenced.

I was myself, however, on that day too much racked by incertitude about the issue of the combat on the Branyiszkó, to take part this time, as on former occasions, in the quickly organized ball. Alone in my lodgings I awaited with painful impatience a report from the field of battle.

Of Colonel Klapka we knew on the 5th of February only thus much, that he had still, on the 24th of January, the defensive task of frustrating the advance of the Schlick corps d'armée across the Theiss, near Tokaj; so we were informed by a letter written in French by Colonel Stein, adjutant-general of the war-minister, and containing the autograph signature of the minister of war, Mészáros, dated from Debreczin, the 24th of January, 1849, which reached me only on the 5th of February, that is, on the twelfth day after it had been dispatched. Meanwhile, it is true, rumors had reached my head-quarters about two encounters, favorable for the Hungarian arms, which Colonel Klapka was said to have had with Field-marshal Lieutenant Count Schlick on the 22d of January at Tarczal, and on the following day, the 23d, at Bodrog-Keresztur; the said private letter of the 24th of January, however, did not mention the matter; and as the distance of these places from Debreczin was only about twelve (German) miles, the news of both victories would have reached the latter place before the sending away of this letter. We had, therefore, so much the greater reason to doubt the authenticity of the rumors about the victories of Colonel Klapka at Tarczal and Bodrog-Keresztur, because these appeared under the *same pompous form* as that under which many a defeat suffered

by us had been obliged to do duty as victory, to raise—as they said—the spirits of the people.

According to the tenor of this official communication, and that we might act with certainty, we could by no means calculate upon a simultaneous energetic offensive of Colonel Klapka against Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick. All we could expect was, that Colonel Klapka, on the news of our approach, would closely follow Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick, who very probably was hastening against us from the Theiss. A resolute rear-guard, however, could nevertheless easily detain him until the Field-marshal should have succeeded in getting rid of our corps d'armée.

In more precise terms :

Field-marshal Lieutenant Count Schlick stood with his main army on the 24th of January at Tokaj, on the Theiss, on the offensive against Debreczin; Colonel Klapka with his corps, opposite to him, on the defensive.

The supposition that the enemy had been successful in his offensive would have been an especially favorable one for the corps d'armée of the upper Danube in its position on the 5th of February, 1849. In order to preserve ourselves against optimist illusions, we had to assume that the certain news of our approach had found the Schlick corps still on this side the Theiss.

Moreover, Colonel Guyon, four days before his arrival at Igló, early in the morning of the 30th of January, had pryingly fallen upon a post of intelligence dispatched in our direction from the hostile column in Leutschau, and so unskillfully that some of these men escaped. They could on the same day have carried to Leutschau the certain report of our approach; and on the next day, 31st of January, Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick in Tokaj—if nearer to Kaschau, the worse for us—could know what he had to do, in case he did not under-estimate the corps d'armée of the upper Danube—a circumstance which could not be supposed in a general like him.

The distance from Tokaj to Korotnok on the western foot of the Branyiskó is nineteen (German) miles, consequently five successive marches of four miles per day. To accomplish this task presupposes a brave, hardy infantry; it does not, however, exceed—especially in winter—the maximum of what they can accomplish.



The troops of Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick were injured to fatigue, and brave.

It was impossible for the Klapka corps to persevere in these forced marches *toujours à la piste* of the main body of the Schlick corps. Why?

Because the pursuer while following can never neglect certain precautionary measures—and these cost time; because the pursued again and again stops the pursuer by opposing to him part of his forces as rear-guard; because this rear-guard, besides its direct resistance, has moreover considerable means at its disposal for interrupting repeatedly the progress of the pursuer on a road intersected by many important local impediments, as is that from Tokaj to the Branyiszkó.

The strength of the Schlick troops was generally estimated at about 15,000 men. It is clear that the forced march of five days must produce a considerable number of stragglers. But even these taken into account, together with the rear-guard, Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick on the 5th of February could oppose to us 10,000 men, in two columns at the same height, one on the Branyiszkó, the other at Kluknó on the Hernád; while Colonel Klapka on the same day could have advanced scarcely further than Kaschau.

Moreover, the road into Gallicia was open to the baggage of the Schlick corps.

The attack upon the hostile position on the Branyiszkó on the 5th of February, if repulsed, would only excite the enemy to assume the offensive, and this probably with the intention of again defeating us before Colonel Klapka had overtaken him; while I should be obliged—on the one hand by the pursuit of the Götz and Jablonowski brigades, together with their allies the Slavonian militia, on the other by my determination no longer to avoid the combat—to act likewise on the offensive, namely, to a compulsory renewal of the attack of the 5th; and thus the conflict between the Schlick corps and the corps d'armée of the upper Danube on the 6th of February must become a decisive one.

By these combinations the issue of the attack of the 5th already obtained for us almost the importance of an answer to the question, "*To be, or not to be?*" and the painful impatience with which I was awaiting Guyon's report becomes explicable—the more so, as the news received from Kirehdrauf in the course of

the afternoon, that there had arrived thither already several wagons full of wounded from the Guyon division, had placed beyond doubt the actual beginning of a serious battle on the Branyiszkó.

This news certainly did not sound unfavorable, considering that *running away, and even leaving the wounded behind*, after each serious engagement, had hitherto been exclusively the course followed by the most of the infantry of the corps d'armée, especially that belonging to the Guyon division. But the higher these hopes of mine had been raised hereby, the deeper they sunk on account of the inconceivably long delay of all further news.

Despairing, I stood on the threshold of a reckoning with the past.

The perception of unavoidable great dangers at hand, if consciousness does not refuse its assistance, urges us irresistibly to that height of intellectual activity, whence the *still-hoping* glance more boldly than at other times endeavors to pierce the vail of futurity, so as to discover beyond it more favorable conjunctures; but whence the *already-despairing* searches in the opposite direction for that crossing of the roads where we perhaps took the *wrong* direction.

The dangers which menaced the existence of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube, and next, through it, that of the fatherland, were unavoidably near and great.

The perception of this had not indeed shaken my self-reliance, but it had put *hope* to flight, and in its room came the question, imperiously demanding an answer:

Whether it would not have been better to have forborne *that step*, which had led me *so far* as to prevent me now from returning, although thousands looked up to me with the firm confidence, *that I would not let them be destroyed in the desperation of fruitless efforts!*

Whether it would not have been better to have issued to the corps d'armée of the upper Danube, instead of the defying proclamations at Waizen, *a pacific summons to a voluntary laying-down of arms.*

Although I had perceived when in Presburg:

That the repeated attempts of the Vienna ministers to overthrow the constitution of Hungary by force of arms were *not less revolutionary*, because our attempt, on German-hereditary ground,

to attack the Croat Ban Baron Jellachich in revolt against the lawful government of the country, *even when*, or rather *only when*, he had crept under the ægis of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz and his army—had been apparently an *aggressive act against Austria*.

That the *constitution of Hungary was worth a sanguinary contest*.

That such a contest was sufficiently justified by the single result of *rendering IMPOSSIBLE for the present the re-establishment of its former dependent condition*.

That *the nation now more assuredly owed it to its honor* to seize the sword for the existence of Hungary as a state, because hitherto it had unfortunately *indolently looked on* while the rude arrogance of several from its midst drove the greatest part of the Slavonians and Romanians into open revolt, and thus foolishly promoted only the views of those who desired nothing more earnestly than *the ruin of the STATE of Hungary*.

All this I had perceived while yet in Presburg.

Nevertheless I was forced to admit when in Waizen :

That the nation cared desperately *little* for its honor, and that I had not the power to force it to act otherwise.

That the enemy had an armed force at its command *far superior* to ours.

That consequently the contest—though demanded thrice over—must remain a *fruitless* one.

In addition to this came the apprehension—excited by *his unworthy public conduct*—of intrigues on the part of Kossuth, which might be sufficient to justify, though only *anachronistically*, the acts of violence of the Vienna government.

What then was it that, considering the visible degeneracy of the nation, the gigantic superiority of the enemy, and my shaken confidence in the purity of Kossuth's politics—could still prevent me from recognizing as my first duty to my companions in arms the speediest renunciation of all further resistance ?

It was the *conviction* that, if the overthrowing of the reformed constitution of Hungary succeeded at the *first* assault, millions of families, for the sake of a few thousands, would *immediately* be brought *again* under the old yoke of subjection.

And those who looked up to me with firm confidence that I would not allow them to perish in the desperation of fruitless



efforts, DID WELL IN TRUSTING ME ; for *no* effort is fruitless when it is made in *defense of the most essential personal rights of millions* ; and *every day* that the corps d'armée of the upper Danube passed under my command *was gained for the securing of these rights*—gained moreover for the *very salutary chastisement* (unfortunately not the directly personal one) *of those men* who (I mention as an instance only *one* fact) had been sufficiently unprincipled to advise the monarch to bind to-day a part of the army by an oath to the Hungarian Constitution, and expect to-morrow *this very* part of the army—perhaps out of loyal *instinct*?—to make common cause with the enemies of the Constitution they had sworn to.

*Thus I became quits with the past* ; thus I remained from this time protected against all weapons which the future might turn against me with the intent of mortally injuring the sinews of my firm resolve TO SAVE OR TO AVENGE THE CONSTITUTION—namely, the conviction that I had to regret nothing of all I had already done for this purpose, nor the consequences of it.

With the equanimity of resignation I now awaited the still-delayed news of the issue of the battle on the Branyiszkó.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

THE night between the 5th and 6th of February was half passed, when an officer delivered to me Colonel Guyon's written report, that the enemy had abandoned his position, begun his retreat toward Eperjes, and was being vigorously pursued.

Colonel Guyon sent me at the same time one of the enemy's dispatches that had been seized. It contained an urgent request from the commander of the hostile column opposed on the Hernád to our Kmety division—which was making demonstrations along the same road toward Kaschau—to the hostile commander on the Branyiszkó, Major-general Count Deym, for assistance, especially artillery.

The situation of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube appeared now to be suddenly essentially changed.

From this hostile dispatch we could conclude with certainty :  
That the hostile column on the Hernád must be much weaker  
than that which had been dislodged from the Branyiszskó ;  
and that, consequently,

*Before Eperjes we could scarcely any longer meet with resistance.*

For if Major-general Deym could have thought it possible at all to prevent our advance with his comparatively feeble brigade—if I remember right, scarcely 2000 men strong—even by the total loss of all his troops, he would assuredly not have abandoned the position on the Branyiszskó ; just as he would hardly have left it, if he had entertained the slightest hope of receiving any considerable reinforcement in the course of the day, or even of the following night, by arresting some division of the Schlick corps on its advance against us, and already sufficiently near for the purpose.

The surprisingly small strength of the enemy dislodged from the Branyiszskó—according to the supposition that we had before us on the evening of the 5th the Schlick main army in two columns, on the Branyiszskó and on the Hernád—showed, first of all, that

*Either* the passage of the enemy across the Theiss near Tokaj had succeeded, and consequently Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick already menaced Debreczin, and resolutely marching against this object, doubtless the most important, deliberately abandoned the base of his operations ;

*Or*, that he had undervalued the importance of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube *previous* to the successful and yet miscarried surprise of Igló (in the night from the 2d to the 3d of February), but that *after* this surprise there was no longer sufficient time to oppose to us a greater force on these barriers.

Both indications urged us to a speedy continuation of the offensive thus favorably commenced.

On the 6th the Aulich division was removed from the Poprád valley into the line of Kirchdrauf, Krompach ; the head-quarters to Kirchdrauf. I hastened in a carriage after Colonel Guyon toward Eperjes, to convince myself of the real position of affairs. I did not succeed, however, in overtaking him ; for I had to be back again in Kirchdrauf before evening, to resolve upon the dispositions for the following day, and to issue them. But I

came up with the division of the left wing, which followed close on the Guyon division, and learnt from its commander that Colonel Guyon had already reached Eperjes, and found it evacuated by the enemy.

This unexpected hasty abandonment of the base of operations led us to suppose that Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick, after the loss of the Branyiskó, had suddenly resolved to effect especially the junction of his corps with the brigades of the Major-generals Götz and Jablonowski; that he intended to accomplish this on the shortest communication between Kaschau and Leutschau, by Bela, Hámor, and Kluknó; and for this reason drew back with such uncommon celerity, on the road to Eperjes toward Kaschau, the part of his corps which had been repulsed from the Branyiskó. By doing so he could meanwhile have his baggage escorted safely from Kaschau by Jászó, Schmölnitz (Szomolnok), into the Zips.

This supposition was by no means improbable in itself, because we knew nothing whatever of Klapka's operations, except what we learnt from the official communication of the 24th of January, and the still earlier rumors about the encounters at Tarczal and Keresztur; and this decided us (on the 7th of February) to leave the whole Kmety division on its former line of demonstration on the Hernád, but to dispose the Aulich division from Kirchdrauf only as far as half-way toward Eperjes, while the head-quarters, together with the division of the left wing, were transferred to Eperjes.

According, however, to information obtained by scouts in the evening of the 7th, the enemy seemed again to have evacuated Eperjes for the purpose of concentrating himself behind the river Tarcza, and once more advancing against us; since the scouts reported that they had seen large masses of troops moving from Kaschau toward Eperjes.

It was then to be expected that the enemy would attack on the following day; and as a precaution the Aulich division was now ordered all the way to Eperjes; while the Kmety division received instructions to advance on the direct road toward Kaschau by Hámor and Bela, from the 8th onward no longer merely making demonstrations, but attacking in earnest where it met with resistance; and as soon as it should hear a continued cannonade in the direction of its left flank, immediately to march



against Kaschau, and even if its attacks should be repeatedly repulsed, incessantly to begin them anew.

Intending to let the enemy come over the Tarcza before we resumed the projected offensive against him, we remained during the night from the 7th to the 8th on the defensive; and were surprised on the morning of the 8th by the news, *that the enemy had demolished the bridge over the river Tarcza at Lemesán.*

I say "*surprised*," because—after the enemy had sufficiently convinced us by the advance of his main body toward the Tarcza, which had begun on the previous evening, that he did not intend the execution of the above-mentioned junction with the Götz and Jablonowski brigades—we had no reason to take this advance for a defensive measure, unless we had presupposed as certain the closest proximity of Klapka's corps in the rear of the enemy. But this we could not do, since all our scouts sent to look out for Klapka, either did not come back at all, or if they did, it was without bringing us any intelligence. *Not till after the retreat of the enemy from Lemesán* did an emissary, whom Colonel Klapka had sent to me several days previously, succeed in reaching my head-quarters.

Now the communication over the Tarcza had first to be restored. Considering the little experience and imperfect equipment of my corps of pioneers, this required much time. We hoped to find near Felső-Olesár a communication still remaining across the river. Information collected beforehand confirmed this, and made us resolve to advance in two columns from Eperjes toward Kaschau, with the Aulich division on the left bank of the Tarcza to the passage just named; but with the Guyon division and that of the left wing on the main road over the bridge near Lemesán, which should be previously repaired.

Before the arrival in our camp of Klapka's emissary, we believed that Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick intended to fall back only as far as the mountain of Kaschau, for the purpose of giving us there a decisive battle, when we should have been nearer to the town of Kaschau—the point of junction of the line of retreat of his main body—as well as to the column detached on the direct road from Kaschau to Leutschau against our Kmety division.

We intended in that case, by advancing on the main road of Eperjes with the Guyon division and that of the left wing, to occupy him in front until the Aulich division should have accom-

plished its passage across the Tarcza at Felső-Olcsár, but then immediately to pass over to the real decisive attack upon the front and right flank of his position; while the Kmety division, advised by the thunder of the guns, had to do the same upon the isolated line of attack which had been assigned to it.

But since we had been apprised—as has been said, only late in the course of the 8th of February—by our emissary, that Colonel Klapka had been some days already acting on the offensive against Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick—the chief of my general staff called my attention to the circumstance, that Count Schlick very probably intended to evacuate Kaschau and fall back by Torna into the district of the operations of the Austrian chief army; and I therefore abandoned the intention of awaiting the Aulich division, which might possibly be delayed by its passage over the river at Felső-Olcsár. The Guyon division and that of the left wing had to attack the enemy immediately and without hesitation, wherever they might find him.

But the restoration of the bridge at Lemesán went on so slowly, that our advanced troops did not reach Kaschau till the morning of the 10th of February, while the enemy had left the town on the evening of the 9th. At the same time Klapka's corps also arrived at Kaschau, and the corps d'armée of the upper Danube was now again united on the Theiss with the Hungarian forces, which had meanwhile been greatly strengthened.

In the course of the same day Colonel Klapka appeared in Kaschau; and late in the evening I repaired thither myself, to deliberate with him and arrange our further operations.

Klapka—after he had succeeded by the battles at Tarczal, Bodrog-Keresztur, and Tokaj (on the 22d, 23d, and 31st of January), in frustrating the attempt of the Schlick corps to cross the Theiss—in the beginning of February had assumed the offensive against it on his own behalf, without knowing any thing more of me than that I still continued the struggle in the mountain-towns, in spite of the instructions of the war-minister to hasten back to the upper Theiss.

Only the unexpected hasty falling back of the Schlick corps on all lines toward Kaschau, after the hot days of Tarczal, Keresztur, and Tokaj, led Klapka to the conclusion that I must already have left the mountain-towns and appeared in the rear of his adversary. He then accelerated his own advance toward

Kaschau, summoning all his strength, and thus rendered it absolutely impossible for Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick to execute his purpose, resolved upon too late, of falling with all his forces first upon me, and then turning himself anew against Klapka only after he had vanquished me.

Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick must now have seen that he would be attacked in Kaschau at latest on the 10th of February by both Hungarian corps in the north and south simultaneously, and evacuated, as has been mentioned, the town on the 9th, in order to save his corps by a bold though dangerous retreat through Torna toward Waizen.

Although this retreat was, so to say, executed before Klapka's eyes, he was nevertheless unable to prevent it, because on the 9th the main body of his corps was, in spite of accelerating his advance to the utmost of his power, still in part one, in part two days' march in the rear behind the Hernád, and as the advanced troops alone were then and there at his disposal. But this only made him resolve to pursue the fleeing enemy more energetically; and for this purpose, on the 10th of February he disposed one half of his main body as far as Enyiczke and Nagy-Ida, while the other half arrived at Hidas-Németi, and two divisions of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube at Kaschau.

Thus stood matters when Colonel Klapka and myself saw each other again, on the evening of the said day, for the first time since the evacuation of the capitals.

On the 11th of February Klapka expected, by means of a forced march, to approach the enemy sufficiently near to be able to overtake him by the following or at latest the second day thereafter, and at least to disperse him in detail. I was, however, during the same time, to prevent at any cost the junction of the Schlick corps d'armée with the Götz and Jablonowski brigades, which had followed me as far as the Zips; and when successful in this, was to attack them.

Thus we aimed at weakening in every possible way, if not at the entire destruction of the hostile forces in upper Hungary, so as thereby to render the chief army of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz less able to withstand the attacks which were to be directed against it from the middle Theiss.

We agreed in an instant on the earlier details of our separate



operations. The results of these operations to become the basis of later ones.

My wish to examine the corps d'armée of Colonel Klapka, or at all events a part of it, decided me to start in a carriage during the night from the 10th to the 11th for Hidas-Németi where, as has been mentioned, a part of the corps was just then stationed. I intended to accompany these troops on the 11th of February on their march, in order to observe them more closely during it, and that I might be enabled to institute a comparison between them and those of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube.

This part of Klapka's corps was to leave Hidas-Németi on the 11th, and follow that part which had already advanced as far as Nagy-Ida and Enyiczke.

But on its way it was overtaken by a new order of Klapka, in obedience to which it had immediately to return and march back toward Miskolcz.

Greatly surprised at this unexpected disposition, in direct contradiction to our agreement of the preceding evening, I left the column, which was now returning again toward Hidas-Németi, and hastened to Klapka's head-quarters at Enyiczke, for the purpose of learning the reason of this counter-march ; which I found to be, that an order had suddenly arrived from Lieutenant-general Dembinski, for Colonel Klapka instantly to set out back again toward Miskolcz, by forced marches, with the whole of his corps.

Klapka was at that time under Dembinski's chief command. He consequently believed himself bound to obey, and I could not prevent him ; but I resolved to undertake immediately—though late—the pursuit of the Schlick corps abandoned by him, with a part of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube ; without, however, giving up the offensive against the Götz and Jablonowski brigades.

The division of the left wing of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube had therefore in the course of the day (the 11th) to start from Kaschau, and hasten after the Schlick corps.

The latter had by this time, it is true, gained an advance of two days' march—thanks to Dembinski's order ; during the next two days, however, its rear-guard was overtaken, and on the 13th at daybreak surprised near Szén. The enemy lost in all

perhaps from 60 to 70 cavalry and about 100 infantry ; but this was the sole result of the pursuit—and the last of my acts as the independent commander of the royal Hungarian corps d'armée of the upper Danube.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

AT the same time as the account of the successful surprise at Szén, a dispatch from the minister of war once more, after a long pause, arrived at my head-quarters.

It contained two most important documents :

1. An *ordre de bataille* for the whole Hungarian forces.
2. The nomination of the Polish Lieutenant-general Dembinski as commander-in-chief of all the Hungarian troops, except those which were under Bem's chief command in Transylvania, the garrisons of the fortresses that were in our hands, and the troops surrounding those occupied by the enemy.

According to this I also was placed under Dembinski's orders.

The first named document divided the whole of the Hungarian forces into isolated divisions of from 4,000 to 6,000 men each, which received the appellation "division of the army," and a number as a distinctive mark. These divisions were to serve the commander-in-chief in his strategic combinations as a war-operative unity. The former corps d'armée were consequently divided, according to their strength, into from two to three such divisions of the army.

The strength of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube—amounting still to from 15,000 to 16,000 men in consequence of our losses in the mountain-towns having been from time to time compensated for by continual recruitings—was not known in Debreczin at the time when this *ordre de bataille* was drawn up. The corps d'armée of the upper Danube accordingly figured as a single army-division, the XVIth, in the said document. (Afterward, however, I was charged to divide it into three army-divisions, while it received as corps d'armée, instead of the designa-

tion "of the upper Danube," the number VII. By the appellation the "seventh corps d'armée" will therefore in future always be meant the former corps d'armée of the upper Danube.)

The rumor had preceded these dispatches by some days, and had encountered considerable antipathies in the corps d'armée of the upper Danube. The greater number of the officers had, like myself, not even the slightest knowledge of the glorious war-like past of Lieutenant-general Dembinski; while the sudden recall of the Klapka corps to Miskolcz, and the immediate favorable consequences of this measure to the fleeing enemy, were not exactly calculated to create all at once confidence in the talents of the unknown foreigner as a general. These officers, not dissatisfied with my command hitherto, did not consider my being subordinated to the authority of this foreigner, whose *début* was so unlucky, as in any way justifiable, and believed that the motives for Dembinski's appointment as commander-in-chief must be sought.

*Partly in the animosity of the Committee of Defense against me, caused by the proclamation of Waizen;*

*Partly in the intention to give them a leader who did not recognize that proclamation.*

The first supposition raised the sympathies of the officers for me, and at the same time their jealousy of the relatively-increasing importance of the other Hungarian corps in consequence of the degradation of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube to a simple army-division; while the second quite sufficed to awaken again the apprehensions of "republican intrigues," declared first after the evacuation of the mountain-towns, and for a while appeased by the proclamation of Waizen, which was *silently acknowledged* by the government.

The consequence of this was, that consultations took place in almost all the divisions about measures of resistance, more or less energetic, against the recent decree of the war-minister Mészáros, who through it fell under the suspicion of allowing himself to be made a tool of by the Committee of Defense.

I was informed of these agitations, however, only when, in consequence of them, three divisions had already declared themselves positively *against* my subordination to Dembinski's orders, and *for* the independency of my position as commander of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube. Nay, the Kmety division espec-



ally assured me of its absolute obedience, even in case I should judge it to be necessary to lead it *against Debreczin*. The Guyon division only, in opposition to the other three divisions of the corps, gave an evasive declaration ; but with it, and as commentary on it, the information arrived at the same time from this very division that Colonel Guyon had made this declaration *without having consulted the body of his officers*.

From these expressions of such a lively antipathy against Dembinski's being commander-in-chief, though they had been evinced only after previous agitations, I could nevertheless not avoid coming to the conclusion, that the older officers in particular, with whom the agitations originated, felt just as strongly as myself an apprehension that Hungary's combat in self-defense would acquire, sooner or later, through the participation of foreign elements in it, an aggressive signification against Austria, by which the invasion of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz would be afterward justified. But this conclusion led me next to the thought, either to retire from my post, or straightway to oppose myself with the corps d'armée to the recent decree of the war-minister.

However, I could not long fail to see that the former step would immediately have brought with it the dissolution of the whole corps d'armée of the upper Danube. For had not its bravest, its most useful officers repeatedly declared, that they would take part in the combat only so long as *my* participation in it guaranteed to them the maintenance, on the part of the Committee of Defense also, of the principles expressed in the proclamation of Waizen ? Now the dissolution of my corps d'armée would very considerably have weakened Hungary's means of resistance ; and consequently by retiring I should have injured the cause of my country more than, for instance, his serene highness Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz, whose especial charge it was. I therefore could not leave my post.

But if I remained at my post and would not obey, then I must be prepared for its resulting in my dismissal, the consequences of which would have been tantamount to those of my voluntary retirement.

After calm reflection, there was nothing left for me but to obey, and console myself meanwhile with the vain hope, that the recent measures of the government, though they had not their

origin in a correct perception of the true interests of our distressed country, yet still were not to be exclusively ascribed to *impure* motives.

Once resolved on obedience, I had next to think on the means of paralyzing the spirit of resistance against the decree of the war-minister, which, by these agitations, had been stirred up in the whole corps d'armée; and to do this without—by an unwise decreeing of punishments against the continuance of the agitations which apparently had been introduced under my ægis, because by officers high in rank—giving rise to a suspicion that I approved of Dembinski's being appointed commander-in-chief, and thereby weakening, to the disadvantage of the country, the confidence of the corps in me, and thus obtaining instead of a prompt obedience, because voluntary, at most a passive, because forced one.

That, on the other hand, I must not approve of the agitations was plain; but neither could I ignore them entirely, for it was already generally known that I had been informed of their result. I thought I should solve this difficult problem best by issuing the follow pacifying address to the corps d'armée, avoiding therein all political matters, and assuming that the corps d'armée was, as it were, wounded only in its *esprit de corps*.

“ORDER OF THE DAY.

“The decree of the Minister of war of the 12th of February, 1849, places the corps d'armée of the upper Danube, with the changed appellation of the ‘Royal Hungarian sixteenth division of the army’ under the chief command of Lieutenant-general Dembinski.

“In officially communicating this to the whole sixteenth division of the army, I most solemnly call upon all the staff and superior officers under my command to treat this apparent humiliation with the same indifference with which I—resigning my independence as commander of a corps d'armée, in obedience to the decree of the united Diet—submit myself freely to the orders of the Lieutenant-general Dembinski, who is said to be a worthy general, and one grown gray in war. (My signature follows.)

“KASCHAU, 14th of February, 1849.”

This address had the desired effect. The agitations in my favor against Dembinski—though as I heard afterward, secretly continued—were in future without any disturbing influence on the free submission of the corps to the orders of the general-in-chief.

The minister of war Mészáros, however, regarded this order of the day as the *corpus delicti* of a daring attempt on my part

to stir up mutiny against himself and Dembinski, and resolved to reprimand me—as it seemed very seriously.

This reprimand was nevertheless a well-deserved one, because I had omitted to inform the war-minister of the circumstances which had called this order of the day into existence ; although I had omitted to do so only for *this* reason, because therein I must inevitably have thrown a very clear light on *his* nullity as war-minister in regard to Kossuth and the Committee of Defense.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

ALMOST simultaneously with the above-mentioned dispatches from the minister of war, I also received an order from Dembinski immediately to communicate to him circumstantially what was the strength of my corps, how and where it was distributed, and what plan of operations I had at that time in execution.

Dembinski received all this information without delay.

My plan of operations was that concerted with Klapka a few days previously. In my communication I pointed out the importance of the continued occupation of Kaschau, the advantageous position of my corps d'armée just then, and the extremely unfavorable situation of the Götz and Jablonowski brigades, and their allies the Slavonian militia. I did not fail also to call Dembinski's attention to what a favorable opportunity was offered to us at this moment of defeating separately, on the one hand the last-named hostile forces, on the other the Schlick corps ; and perhaps, by my rapid advance to the relief of Komorn, of compelling Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz again to relinquish his offensive operations against the Theiss ; and by these means secure to ourselves time, of which we had still no superfluity, to prepare for a decisive stroke.

Dembinski's answer was to this effect, that he did not by any means overlook the value of my suggestions relative to the nearest operations ; but that he perceived the moment for the intended decisive blow had already arrived, and could not be deferred : he therefore urgently summoned me for the present to leave to



their fate the brigades of Götz and Jablonowski, together with their allies the Sclavonian militia, and lead my corps d'armée, as soon as possible, from their position around Kaschau to Miskolcz.

In consequence of this order I left Kaschau; and dividing my corps into two columns, marched one by Enyiczke, Forró, Szikszó, the other by Moldau and along the valley of the Bodva, to Miskolcz.

Dembinski received, with a report hereupon, at the same time a detailed account of the daily stations on the route. By this means he could send his dispositions direct to any single division during the march, instead of forwarding them through me.

The two columns of the seventh army corps were of the same strength. Each of them consisted of two divisions (I still retained meanwhile the original plan of having the corps d'armée in four divisions): *the column in the valley of the Bodva*, of the division of the left wing (the command of which, after the voluntary retirement of its former commander, was confided to Colonel afterward General Pöltenberg), and the Guyon division; *the second column*—that on the high road from Kaschau to Miskolcz—consisted of the Aulich and Kmety divisions. At the head of both columns were, in the valley of the Bodva, the Pöltenberg division, on the main road the Aulich division. On the 20th of February, according to the plan for the march, the former should have arrived at the height of Edelény, the latter at Szikszó.

On the same day, while on the way from Forró to Szikszó, the latter received Dembinski's order, by turning westward into Szikszó from the main road, to continue its march with the least possible interruption as far as Sajó-Szent-Péter.

That I might obtain some certain information respecting the movements of the Götz and Jablonowski brigades, I had remained later in Kaschau, and left this town only with the last sections of my corps. I did not, therefore, learn the altered route of the Aulich division till afterward, from a report of its commander.

Whether this deviation from the line of march toward Miskolcz was for a part of the distance only—a temporary one—or rather was the starting-point of a new line of operations, perhaps removed to the road to Lossonecz, was for me now a most important question, because on it depended the arrangements to be

made, by way of precaution, relative to providing for the corps. I thought I should receive an explanation soonest by proceeding to Dembinski's head-quarters at Miskolecz, and accordingly hastened thither in the first instance, on the 21st of February.

Both Dembinski and his adjutant were absent; and nobody at his head-quarters could give me the desired explanation.

This uncertainty as to the position of the seventh army corps, of which the Aulich and Pöltenberg divisions should, according to the original plan of march, have already reached Miskolecz on the 21st; the conviction that Dembinski had taken no care whatever to provide for them in the new district of location, and that consequently these divisions for that day at least must either suffer from hunger, or resort to the forcible seizure of the most essential supplies; and, in the next place, the apprehension of seeing undermined the hitherto good discipline of the seventh corps through the repeated occurrence of such demoralizing circumstances, which though certainly not always unavoidable, yet generally, and in this case especially, could very easily have been guarded against: all this induced me to represent, in a letter to General Dembinski, the injury which must result to the success of our arms, if he directed the movements of isolated parts of an army corps without at the same time giving due information on the subject to its commander, who was responsible for the maintenance of his troops in a warlike condition.

The letter which contained these representations was delivered at Dembinski's head-quarters, with a request that I might be immediately informed of his return.

He did not return, if I recollect rightly, till the morning of the 22d of February; and I at once waited upon him, in company with the chief of the general staff, as well as the then adjutant of the seventh army corps, and another officer of my suite.

As I entered with my companions, Dembinski had just finished reading my last letter to him; he had perhaps also already seen the "Order of the Day," of the 14th of February, from Kaschau, given above; and probably both had violently excited him against me; for scarcely had I introduced myself and my companions, when he attacked me with uproarious vehemence. He expatiated on his services to Hungary, and the great sacrifices *he* had *already* made for the salvation of my country.

"I have laid down the supreme command in my fatherland\* to save this poor country," cried he; "yes, I have just now saved your corps, while you do not trouble yourself at all about it. Do you know where your divisions are? No! you do not know! Yet you reproach me. I came to Hungary only on the condition that I should be intrusted with the supreme command over all the Hungarian troops; and the government has empowered me to have you shot, if you do not obey. I have met you with kindness, because I know that it must mortify a Hungarian to serve under a non-Hungarian. But you reproach me for my orders, instead of obeying them!"

Dembinski was somewhat exhausted by the excessive straining of his voice, and gasped a moment for breath. I wished to take advantage of this involuntary pause to show him that his orders, so far as they concerned me, had been punctually followed. But he probably attributed to me an aggressive intention, and interrupted me with the question, several times repeated in the greatest passion: whether I thought he had not courage enough to fight a duel with me. Without, however, waiting for my answer, he suddenly digressed to recent events.

"I advised you to be very cautious on your march toward Putnok," continued he; "why have you not followed my advice?" and so on.

It was to Dembinski's adjutant, who was present, and made meanwhile unceasing efforts to calm his chief, that I owed at last the opportunity of speaking. I now enumerated all the orders which had come to me from him, showed that they had been punctually followed, and wished to know what order I had disobeyed.

As he could make no reply to this, he again began talking of the above advice, which I had not followed.

But I reminded him, that disregard of well-meant advice was not disobedience; that, besides, his advice had been quite superfluous, as the march of the seventh army corps from Kaschau to Miskolcz had been already arranged with an eye to the danger which threatened from Putnok; and I finally requested him to send me only *orders*, and to communicate to me also such as he should think it necessary to give in a direct manner to separate

\* Dembinski probably meant that which was intended for him *in spe* of a new insurrection in Poland.



divisions of my corps ; but that, once for all, I thanked him most courteously for his *advice*.

Hereupon I and my companions took our leave.

I could not on this occasion resist the impression, that I had just made the acquaintance of a man who would be much more in his proper place as the inmate of a lunatic asylum than as the leader of an army.

Dembinski's adjutant, a circumspect man, followed us directly, and sought to excuse the unwonted violence of his chief, by representing it as the consequence of my letter, which had been taken as conveying censure. He assured me besides, that Dembinski already saw that in his passion he had given way to unjust expressions ; adding that, for these reasons, he hoped no obstacle would be made on my part to smoothing the way for a future *entente cordiale* between us.

I declared to Dembinski's adjutant, that, on the contrary, I intended to take care to preserve a good understanding between myself and his chief ; but would therefore raise my demands on his exertions in the service of my country so much the higher.

Dembinski's performances up to that time, however, so far as I was acquainted with them, justified but very slender expectations.

On the 5th of February he had crossed the firmly frozen Theiss near Lök, below Tokaj, with the then Kazinczy army-division, and had marched at first to Miskolcz. There he learned on the 9th, or at latest in the night between the 9th and the 10th, that Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick had left the town of Kaschau, taking the road to Torna. On the 11th he ordered back to Miskolcz the Klapka corps (from this time called the first army corps), which was pursuing the enemy ; but while on its march made it turn toward Sajó-Szent-Péter and Putnok. On the 14th of February Dembinski attacked, with only the Kazinczy division the main body of the retreating Schlick corps at Tornalja. The attack was repulsed at its very beginning ; whereupon Dembinski drew the Klapka corps, together with the Kazinczy division, which had at the same time been broken up and incorporated with it, back to Miskolcz, and from thence made them advance on the road of Mezö-Kövesd toward the capitals. The seventh army corps he likewise called back from Kaschau to Miskolcz, to make it follow the first corps.

Now the question was, why Dembinski, who certainly intended to attack Schlick's retreating corps in earnest and not in mere fun, had not done this two days sooner (on the 12th)? Tornaia is only seven (German) miles from Miskolcz; Dembinski could consequently quite easily have stood before Tornaia on the 12th.

The answer to this might perhaps be found in the recalling of the first army corps from Nagy-Ida and Enyiczke to Miskolcz, and would be, *that Dembinski did not dare to go against the Schlick corps with the feeble Kazinczy division alone.*

But this explanation is contradicted by the fact, *that on the 14th he had nevertheless actually dared the attack with ONLY the Kazinczy division*; while the first army corps remained inactive at Putnok.

Then again, in excuse of Dembinski, it might be assumed that he had moved the first army corps nearer to the point of attack only *that, being protected by it in his rear, he might be able to execute his attacks with the Kazinczy division the more boldly and obstinately.* Irrespective of the strategic disproportion which existed in the present case between the modest offensive operations of a single weak division and the imposing protective measures which had required a whole corps d'armée, this supposition is contradicted by the *notorious haste* with which Dembinski at once utterly abandoned the attack on the marching column of the Schlick corps, as soon as the enemy had seemed disposed seriously to accept the combat.

*Irresolution* stamped this mismanaged offensive of Dembinski against Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick.

A further performance of Dembinski was the following:

While the seventh army corps, as has been mentioned, was marching in two columns of equal strength and on the same height, the one in the Bodva valley, the other on the high road from Kaschau to Miskolcz, Field-marshal Lieutenant Schlick made an offensive movement from Rimaszombat by Putnok toward Miskolcz. Dembinski, informed of this sufficiently early, was quite right in concentrating both the Guyon and Pöltenberg divisions when advancing toward Sajó-Szent-Péter, the point menaced next by the enemy, and moreover drew toward him also the Aulich division from Szikszó, in order energetically to repulse the enemy. *To this measure nothing can be objected.*

But now the enemy—apprised of this—suddenly gives up the offensive, and withdraws, by a forced retreat, from the danger of a disadvantageous conflict. And what does Dembinski then?

*He allows the three divisions from early in the morning till late at night, in battle array, to await—evidently in vain—the attack of the enemy, WHILE MAN AND HORSE ARE PERISHING WITH HUNGER AND THIRST.*

This mistake made me apprehend a great *want of penetration* on the part of Dembinski.

But *irresolution* and *want of penetration* are not among the *qualities desired in a general.*

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

It seemed as if Dembinski seriously intended to assume the offensive against the Austrian army.

In the evening of the same day on which I had spoken for the first time with him (22d of February), I received an order to follow the first army corps on the main road toward Mezö-Kövesd.

All the dispositions during this advance were forwarded to us, already elaborated in their details, from Dembinski's war-office.

On the 24th of February the head-quarters of Lieutenant-general Dembinski were in Mezö-Kövesd, mine in Mezö-Keresztes.

I availed myself of the afternoon of that day to pay a visit to Dembinski; for I really wished to bring about a good understanding between him and me.

He received me in such a manner as plainly showed that he intended to make me forget his absurd behavior during our first meeting in Miskolcz.

He had just got Klapka's report of a sudden attack made during the preceding night on those troops of the Schlick corps which had entered Pétervására the day before, but which had been only partially successful.

Some days earlier a hostile division of cavalry had been sur-



prised in Kompolt by Aristid Dessewffy, first lieutenant in the first army corps, and had suffered severe loss.

These attacks greatly incensed Dembinski against Klapka. He asserted that by such surprises our offensive was only revealed to the enemy before the time; while, on the other hand, they prevented the enemy from discovering his own intentions.

It can not be denied that there was a certain *originality* in this opinion. Its originality was especially evident in the natural consequence resulting from it, which in the present instance plainly amounted to this, that Dembinski would have been better pleased if Colonel Klapka had allowed himself to be suddenly attacked by the Austrians; because then, on the contrary, *they would have revealed their offensive prematurely*, and Klapka would have been prevented *from discovering Dembinski's intentions*.

Besides Klapka, the government also was on this day the object of Dembinski's dissatisfaction. He complained, that the seat of the government being fixed in Debreczin, and the necessity of continually protecting that town, greatly increased the difficulty of his task against the enemy. Further, that the government could not be depended on for the fulfillment of its promises: thus, for instance, it had been promised to him, that from the 16th of February onward there should constantly be a fortnight's provisions for 60,000 men at his disposal in Tiszafüred; while according to the reports which had just been received from thence, the wants of the next five days were scarcely provided for.

The *entente cordiale* between Dembinski and myself seemed now to be in a fair way. Dembinski had already made me the confidant of his vexation at Klapka's sudden attacks, and at the unfulfilled promises of the government.

Satisfied with these results of my initiative at accommodation, I returned toward evening to my head-quarters at Mezö-Keresztes.

In Dembinski's war-office the detailed dispositions for the next days had been delivered to the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps, who had accompanied me on this visit, in case Dembinski should think proper to admit him to a consultation in common—while Dembinski himself had not said a word about them to me, and had evidently been endeavoring to avoid any conference upon our operations. Thus I learned only after

I had already left Dembinski what was to be done on the ensuing days.

The dispositions made known the intention of first occupying the little river Tarna from Sirok as far as Bod ; but at the same time in the details the *tendency to isolate from each other the divisions of one and the same army corps* was striking.

While the one half of the first army corps was ordered to Sirok, and the other to Kápolna, the Pöltenberg division of the seventh army corps, advancing from Mezö-Kövesd through Kerecsend, had to place itself between the former two, and occupy Verpelét and Fel-Döbrö, while the Aulich division should take its direction to Kál.

To perceive the disadvantages of thus intermingling two army corps accustomed to the peculiarities of their own commanders, no very rare perspicacity—one would think—is wanted.

Dembinski consequently was either destitute of even *this* perspicacity, or the motive of this measure, uncalled for by the circumstances, and materially restricting the capacity of the separated divisions as well as of the whole army corps for rendering service, was no other than a definite endeavor on his part to accustom the separated divisions to being isolated from their commanders of army corps, thereby weakening the *dreaded* influence of these commanders on the minds of their troops, and thus to render possible *the predominance of his own influence*.

Dembinski had given me to understand on the 24th of February in Mezö-Kövesd, that he was desirous of speaking with me again on an early day, but that on the following day he would remove his head-quarters to Erlau (Eger.) This intimation induced me to pay him a second visit in the forenoon of next day, the 25th, while he was still in Mezö-Kövesd, and before his departure for Erlau. But I no longer found him in his old head-quarters ; and supposing that he had probably some important affair to discuss with me, I immediately continued my ride as far as Erlau.

I overtook him on the road thither, entered with him into Erlau, and there awaited his orders.

Toward evening he excused himself, that he had found neither time nor opportunity for a conference with me, and appointed the next day at his head-quarters.

I had to ride back during the night to Mezö-Kövesd, to make

some important arrangements in my own head-quarters, which on the 26th of February were to be at that place.

In the forenoon of the 26th, however, I was back again in Erlau, expecting Dembinski's orders.

This time he spoke with me only upon some measures relating to the subsistence of the troops. But in the further course of the conversation he put some questions to me about the ground and the manner of fighting which were best suited to the troops of the seventh army corps. I told him that hitherto they had learnt only *the little war in the mountains*.

He then inquired what kind of troops in the corps were most to be depended upon. Before, however, I could answer, he said that he believed our infantry, as a whole, could not be relied on, but that from the cavalry he expected extraordinary services. I confirmed his supposition in so far as related to the seventh army corps—the other corps I hardly knew by name; at the same time calling his attention to the fact that our cavalry, though superior to that of the enemy in agility and perseverance, was by no means its equal in numerical strength.

Dembinski hereupon assured me, with much earnestness, *that he uncommonly wished for a few thousand more men* THAN WERE JUST THEN AT HIS DISPOSAL.

It can not in fact be denied that THEREIN Dembinski had SOMETHING *in common with the most celebrated generals*.

Meantime midday had arrived. Dembinski was entertained by a prebendary in Erlau, and invited me, together with the chief of the general staff of my army corps, who had again accompanied me on this visit, to dine with him.

The meal was nearly over; we were just adding the best to the good—the world-renowned Erlau wine—when suddenly it was reported that a brisk thundering of cannon was heard in the direction of Verpelét.

Dembinski denied it *à priori*, and did so even very angrily when the report was confidently repeated.

Having opened a window of the saloon, I had meanwhile convinced myself with my own ears of the correctness of the report, and now invited Dembinski to do the same.

Unwillingly he quitted the table, came near the window, and listened; his countenance expressing the conviction that we were all deceived.



The repeated hollow sound of the ground, however, was too distinctly perceptible, and too similar to the distant thunder of cannon, to be mistaken for any other sound. From the moment when Dembinski *was forced* to acknowledge this, his demeanor degenerated into the fury of a demoniac ; above all, he bawled for a carriage and horses. But the only available means of conveyance in all his head-quarters was a farmer's cart, which had brought me and my companion—the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps—from Mezö-Kövesd to Erlau, and stood ready for our return. We invited Dembinski to allow himself to be conveyed in our company to the proximity of the field of battle. He had no choice, and was obliged to comply. I urged haste.

The poor vehicle might have taken us forward about 100 paces, and we were still within the town, when suddenly a few of the more curious from among the masses of the inhabitants of Erlau sprang forward, and laying hold of the reins of the horses, asseverated in good Hungarian, that it was impossible for them to suffer the general-in-chief to be taken a single step further in such a miserable cart. This would be—they thought—a disgrace to the town of Erlau, nay, to the whole nation.

Irritated at this foolishness, I authoritatively ordered the unwelcome champions of the honor of the town and nation to get out of the way. Dembinski, who understood not a syllable of Hungarian, fell into a still greater passion than myself, and assisted me with his menacing gestures ; the chief of the general staff helped us in our shouting and swearing, and the guardians of Erlau's honor yielded ; we got again under way.

Dembinski now wished to know what these people had wanted. I interpreted to him their practical views in reference to the honor of their town and nation ; when, lo, he made the cart stop, and declared he would wait till better horses and a more respectable carriage could be procured.

I had been very wrong to behave so brutally to the champions of their civic and national honor !

Dembinski, however, very soon repented of his hasty determination ; for in spite of the evident speed with which one of the patriots had set off, with the intention of placing his equipage at our service, a considerable time elapsed without our getting sight

of the respectable carriage promised us, and the thunder of the artillery rather increased than diminished.

From a conceivable precaution we had meanwhile kept our seats in the much-despised hay-cart. The patriot with the equipage might possibly delay too long, or in the end altogether fail us. Dembinski and I were seated on a bundle of straw, which had been laid across the racks, and had partly been forced by our weight into the body of the wagon, which became narrower toward the bottom.

The thunder of the battle—as has been said—rather increased than diminished. At each new hollow sound along the ground Dembinski started up, but just as often fell back again on his seat with all his weight. These shocks operating upon one side of the bundle of straw under us, it was by jerks more and more pushed to my side, and at last, together with me, over the low rack of the wagon; while Dembinski on his side sank in ever deeper and deeper, and finally so deep that he could no longer sit upright.

This situation seemed to me not befitting the dignity of the general-in-chief. I feared that to the honorable public it might even appear ridiculous. The incidental remark of a patriot very close to us, that that gentleman (pointing to Dembinski) must be a very brave man, because he was growing so extremely angry at each explosion of cannon, while he (the speaker) was filled with alarm—certainly convinced me that my apprehensions as to the ridicule were unfounded; nevertheless I advised the general to alight meanwhile until the new means of conveyance should arrive. Already out of all patience, however, Dembinski would now hear neither of alighting nor of waiting any longer, but wished to continue again without delay our journey in the wagon. Against this the honorable public protested anew, crowded together in front of our horses, and said that the caleche would be there immediately. This indeed made its appearance next moment, and thus prevented the unequal contest which threatened to take place between the impatient general and the patient patriots of Erlau.

In this new and really more respectable carriage we proceeded uninterruptedly toward Verpelét. But the nearer we approached the field of battle, and the louder the thunder of the great guns became, the more Dembinski's expressions, both in words and

gestures, were unlike those of a being endowed with reason. One absurdity followed another from the trembling lips of the commander-in-chief, while at one time rowing alternately with his arms and legs, as if he would accelerate the motion of the carriage, at another repeatedly starting up from his seat, next threatening with his fists in the direction of the battle-field, he revealed to us the state of his mind in all its pitifulness. This state was the *moral agony* of a braggart, who having pretended to be a strong swimmer, was now seized with mortal fear lest he should be drowned, because the water into which he had ventured happened to reach up to his neck!

As far as I could make out from the mass of nonsense with which we were regaled by Dembinski during this journey, it must on this day have been still very far from the intention of the Hungarian general-in-chief to give battle to the enemy. At least his oft-repeated exclamations, "This I did not wish yet!" "It is too soon yet!" mainly indicated this.

But if this was the case, then was it in fact by no means handsome on the part of Messieurs the Austrian generals to attack us without saying a single word about it to any one, or even previously asking Mr. Dembinski whether it would be agreeable to him just then!

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## CHAPTER XXV.

DEMBINSKI's last dispositions in detail, dated from the headquarters at Mezö-Kövesd, the 24th of February, for the first and seventh army corps, and a division of the second corps, which was then cantoned in Tiszafüred and Poroszló, extended to the 26th of February inclusive. In consequence of these dispositions, on this day—during which we were attacked so completely contrary to Dembinski's wish—his forces stood:

A division of the first army corps in Sirok;

The Pöltenberg division of the seventh corps in Verpelét and Fel-Döbrö;



The other division of the first corps in Al-Döbrö, Tótfalva, Kápolna, and Kompolt ;

A division of the second corps in Kál.

The first and second army corps consisted each of two divisions ; while the seventh corps contained four, as has been already often mentioned.

One division of the second army corps Dembinski had left behind in Poroszló and Tiszafüred, to defend the passage across the Theiss.

But three divisions of the seventh corps stood on the 26th of February in Maklár (Aulich), in Mezö-Kövesd (Guyon), and in Abrány (Kmety).

During our journey from Erlau to Verpelét we had discovered that Kápolna was the centre of the engagement, and turned therefore from Szalók by Döménd and Kerecsend on to the high road of Gyöngyös, which leads to Kápolna. The day was coming to a close, the fire of the guns began already to be seen, when we reached the last-mentioned place.

While still outside the town we met the standards of a regiment of hussars which had been ordered to attack.

In the Austrian army there exists the custom—I know not from what period—of the cavalry leaving its standards completely out of action, so as not to run the risk of losing them *mal à propos* in an attack. This custom certainly says less for the self-reliance of the troops than for their wise precaution. It had, however, been introduced, and our hussar regiments had retained it, in order to make *partie égale* with their adversaries.

We ordered three men from the escort of the standards to alight, and mounted their horses. Dembinski and the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps rode to Kápolna ; I, by Dembinski's direction, to Kál. I was to take measures to keep the Tarna, near the latter place, in our possession ; he would do the same near Kápolna.

While I was still on my way, the combat near Kál suddenly ceased. I had indeed no particular desire—in the probably precipitate and disorderly retreat of our troops, which might perhaps be the cause of the sudden interruption of the engagement—to encounter, alone as I was, the advancing enemy, and preferred going round the place eastward. After thus having crossed the road to Szikszó, and reached that from Füzes to Abrány, I

learned from some peasants that the division of the second army corps, for which I was seeking, had at the very commencement of the battle advanced across the Tarna, and was still on the other side. The night was very dark; I wandered about for a long time, until I succeeded in finding the division. It had effected its passage across the Tarna by making use of a ford that was practicable with difficulty. I called the attention of the commander to the danger to which his troops were exposed by their position, close to the ford that might easily be missed, by the mere essay of a night attack on the part of the enemy; and ordered him immediately to make the division fall back to the left bank, and leave only the outposts on the right.

Meantime the hostile rocket-battery before Kápolna also finally ceased its efforts to set fire to that place, after having vainly continued them till the night became very dark; and the combat was extinct along the whole line, without Dembinski or myself having exercised any influence on its course. In my then subordinate position, there reached me mostly merely private rumors about Klapka's doings, as well as about the details of this *first* day's battle of Kápolna in general. Only this much I know for certain, that our troops maintained on that day (26th of February) the whole line of the Tarna from Verpelét as far as Kál, and did not abandon it till the second day of the battle (the 27th.)

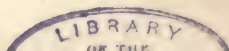
The main body of the division of the second army corps having been quartered in Kál as well as was practicable, and provided with victuals, I hastened back to Kápolna, to learn what Dembinski intended to do on the following day.

I found the commander-in-chief at a farm-house situated on the main road eastward from Kápolna; but could not speak with him, he being already asleep when I reached his night-quarters. He had, however, given the following dispositions for the next day (the 27th of February):

“The Aulich division advances for the reinforcement of the extreme left wing of the army from Maklár to Kál, joins there the division of the second army corps, and hinders the enemy from crossing the Tarna.

“The Guyon division has to advance from Mezö-Kövesd as far as Kápolna, to strengthen the centre;

“And the Kmety division from Abrány as far as Kerecsend, and there remain *en reserve*.



“The remaining divisions have to maintain their positions on the Tarna.”

Colonel Klapka continued to be entrusted with the right wing, and myself with the left, near Kál, during the next day also; while Dembinski reserved to himself again the command of the centre.

The drawing up of the special orders necessary in consequence of these dispositions, as well as dispatching them with the greatest speed to the divisions, had been committed by Dembinski to the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps. He was destitute, however of almost all means for discharging this important commission. Dembinski's orderly officers had remained behind in Erlau, mine in Mezö-Kövesd. Our being in Kápolna was known in neither of those places. A single officer—of the division of the first army corps, which was in action near the latter place, whom Dembinski had taken for the purpose of sending him as a courier to Erlau—was at our disposal, but only in so far as the dispatches could go through Erlau. The chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps happened fortunately, on the morning of the 26th of February, to have ordered two of my orderly officers from Mezö-Kövesd to Erlau, that they might be there in readiness on any unforeseen emergency during our presence in Dembinski's head-quarters. To this precaution he now owed the possibility of sending the orders to the Aulich division (in Maklár) and to the Kmety (in Abrány), by Dembinski's courier to Erlau, and from thence by these two orderly officers on to Maklár and Abrány.

When, on returning from Kál, I arrived, as has been mentioned, at Dembinski's night-quarters near Kápolna, the courier of the commander-in-chief had been gone a long time with the dispatches for Aulich and Kmety. I expressed a serious apprehension that the dispatch for the Kmety division in Abrány, especially, would reach its destination too late, on account of the great circuit through Erlau; but I soon perceived that, under existing circumstances, it had not been possible to adopt any *better* plan.

Dembinski had given the dispositions only late at night. Then the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps—if he wished to send the orders direct to one or other division—would first have had himself to seek in the camp for the requisite officer; but the night was pitch dark, and the troops were camping with-



out watch-fires, on account of the proximity of the enemy ; the places where they were encamped, as well as the localities around Kápolna were unknown to him. Thus he had to fear he might wander about uselessly half the night, without finding a camp ; and even if he should be successful, it still remained doubtful whether any one of the officers would immediately have condescended to the nocturnal ride as courier. An order of the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps had no weight with the officers of the first army corps, to whom he was scarcely known by name.

It was consequently to be feared, that in this way, even under the most favorable circumstances, more precious time might be lost than the circuitous route by Erlau would take ; besides, the forwarding of an important dispatch by the first, best officer who happens to be at hand, is always running a risk, and was especially so in our army, which swarmed with uncertain officers.

The chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps intended to deliver in person the dispatch to the Guyon division in Mezö-Kövesd ; it seemed to me, however, more advisable to let him remain near the commander-in-chief, and to go myself with the dispatch to Mezö-Kövesd. I could the rather venture to do this, even at the risk, if stopped by any unforeseen obstacle, of arriving too late at my post in Kál, as in that case the command of the left wing of the army would have devolved upon Colonel Aulich ; and as he had far more experience and tact on the battle-field than myself, my accidental delay would by no means have had a really unfavorable influence on the issue of the contest.

The arrival of the Guyon division on the field of battle at the earliest possible moment was of great importance—of incomparably more than my presence in Kál at the beginning of the action. Time pressed, and I hastened to discharge the duty of courier.

The route which I took from Kápolna to Mezö-Kövesd lay through Kerecsend. Here I quite unexpectedly met with Colonel Pöltenberg. By his patrols, who had been sent toward Kápolna after the termination of the combat, and who in the darkness probably had taken a wrong direction, he had been informed in Fel-Döbrö that Kápolna was already occupied by the enemy ; whereupon he led his division from Fel-Döbrö back to Kerecsend, fearing he might be isolated. I corrected Pöltenberg's erroneous suppositions about the result of the conflict of the past

day, communicated to him his task for the next morning, adding that he must of necessity advance again to the Tarna before day-break; and then continued my way to Mezö-Kövesd.

I arrived about four o'clock in the morning (on the 27th of February), ordered the troops quartered there to be roused, and gave to Colonel Guyon the order to advance with the greatest speed to Kápolna—but myself awaited its execution; for however much Guyon could be relied upon in the field of battle itself—that is, when the performance of his task did not require any particular discernment, but only purely personal valor—he little answered all other demands that war makes on the leader of large independent bodies of troops. His arrangements commonly reminded one of the motto, “Every thing imprudently—Every thing inopportunately!” they had consequently corresponding results.

Thus it happened this time, that in spite of my reiterated urging him to haste, he delayed the departure of his division until it was broad daylight.

Only after it had arrived at Kerecsend, and the distribution of spirits, as usually officially ordered by Guyon before every engagement, was well over, could I at last with confidence report to the commander-in-chief the approach of the Guyon division.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

DEMBINSKI had just been forced to evacuate Kápolna when I came up with him, some hundred paces eastward of his last night-quarters, with the announcement of the approach of the Guyon division. While yet at some distance, he called to me, why was I not at my post!—and continually pointing in the direction of Verpelét, he exclaimed repeatedly, “The right wing already retreats, because you are not at your post.”

“The right wing does not concern me; I command the left,” was my answer.

“But I have sent you an order to command the right wing,” he exclaimed.

"I know of no such order," I replied, vexed at this new occasion of a conflict with the commander-in-chief.

"Then ride instantly to Verpelét," he imperiously ordered me, "and there take the command; for the two colonels are rivals."

I now knew what I had to do; briefly made my report of the approach of the Guyon division; and without wasting another word, hastened across the fields toward Verpelét.

While on my way thither, I began to reflect on what Dembinski could have meant by the two rival colonels. From the position of the army he could evidently have referred only to Klapka and Pöltenberg: but the former commanded an army corps, while the latter was merely the commander of a division, was far younger in rank, and was besides altogether free from any pretension which could have justified the supposition that he disputed with Klapka the chief command of the right wing.

The right wing was in fact retreating, though probably not because Pöltenberg had resisted Klapka's orders, but because the united forces of Klapka and Pöltenberg were not strong enough to cope with the Schlick corps.

In order to join the Austrian chief army on the shortest line—in sight of Dembinski's army—the Schlick corps had during the preceding night successfully forced the defile at Sirok, which was occupied by a division of the first army corps under Klapka's personal command; the other corps being stationed, as has been mentioned, near Kápolna.

Klapka had retreated with his division, after the loss of the defile, as far as Verpelét, where he joined himself to the Pöltenberg division, sent thither in the meanwhile by Dembinski, for the purpose of defending the passage across the Tarna against the Schlick corps, which, advancing from Sirok by Szent-Mária, appeared on the morning of the second day of the battle at Kápolna (27th of February) on the right bank of the Tarna, opposite Verpelét. Field-marshal Schlick, however, *forced* the passage, and both Hungarian divisions were driven back.

To bring these to a stand, and to lead them forward again, was therefore the task which Dembinski had just assigned me.

On the southeastern heights near Verpelét I already encountered some of Pöltenberg's pieces of horse-artillery, the servers of which had been cut down by the hostile cavalry. The resolute attack of a squadron of Alexander hussars, vigorously supported



by the fire of the fourteenth Honvéd battalion, had, it is true, regained from the cuirassiers the cannons that had been lost; but as they for the moment were without servers, they had to be withdrawn from the combat.

Soon after the guns, I came upon a part of the infantry—*more consueto*, in most admired disorder—and at last upon the cavalry, well-serried, but not retiring *en échiquier*; the retreat was, instead, a general one, and altogether without plan or regularity; the batteries went on heedlessly among the divisions. The general impression produced on me by the whole scene was, that nothing more could be done that day.

Pöltenberg's confident personal bearing contradicted this comfortless conclusion; though, on the other hand, the unmistakable expression of despondency in Klapka's features seemed to justify it.

The reason of this very different state of mind in the two leaders on one and the same point was probably to be found in recent events. The Kalpka division during the last night had accomplished nothing at Sirok, and just now at Verpelét but very little; while Colonel Pöltenberg was satisfied with the behavior of his troops during the preceding evening at Fel-Döbrö, as well as in the late conflict at Verpelét.

I found both colonels in consultation as to what was to be immediately done then and there. Klapka declared that he, for his part, would ride toward Erlau in pursuit of the half of his division which had retreated in that direction, and again lead it against the enemy. Should this, he said, be no longer possible, he would confine himself during the day to protecting Erlau.

I had nothing to say against the execution of this idea; the less so, as the other half of the division of the first army corps, under the direction of the commander of division Bulharin (a Pole), remained there at my disposal.

Colonel Klapka accordingly did as he had said; and I took the further command of the right wing of the army, now weakened by a fourth.

The said half of the Bulharin division, thus placed at my disposal, consisted of three battalions and an incomplete battery of three-pounders. The three battalions strolled on without compactness, in picturesque groups, like peasants to the festival of their church's dedication, only somewhat quicker, toward the

heights before Döménd and Kerecsend. The train was consequently so expanded on all sides, that at present it was useless to think of compacting the *whole* of the brigade which had been committed to me. I must be content if I should accomplish this with a part of it.

Indicating as the place of my next position the nearest eminences toward Kerecsend, which commanded the widest extent of ground, I dispatched the officers of my suite to combine on this point as many as possible of the three scattered battalions.

Pöltenberg's division had remained together. It had to re-establish a junction between the Bulharin half division—the extreme right wing of the army—and the centre near Kápolna.

To the east of Verpelét an insignificant, narrow, undulating ridge of eminences stretches from north to south toward the high road between Kápolna and Kerecsend, and terminates, north of the road, in a *summit* well wooded on its eastern declivity. It is situated about half an hour's distance northwest of Kerecsend, and commands the whole ridge. From it sinks an elongated hill, being the last lateral spur, toward Fel-Döbrö, and forming with the ridge a re-entering angle, the sides of which diverge toward the northwest, that is, toward Verpelét.

The northern declivity of this hill is pretty steep, the western, on the contrary, slopes more gently; while toward the southwest and south—consequently in the direction of Kápolna and the high road—the undulating ground, converging with the not less gently sloping southern declivity of the said summit, becomes level.

Colonel Pöltenberg established himself with his division on this hill, while the Bulharin half division was employed for the occupation of the ridge north of the summit.

But the summit itself was to serve as a last hold for the said half division, in case it should be repulsed from the ridge by the enemy.

From this summit not only the ridge toward the north, far beyond gun-range, could be surveyed, but also the whole battle-field of Kápolna.

When the Pöltenberg division and the Bulharin half division were established on the two points above mentioned, the position of our army was in echelons from the centre to the right. The

centre facing Kápolna and the left wing facing Kál stood nearly at the same height. By the rapid advance of Field-marshal Schlick, however, the hostile army soon arrived in a line parallel with our own.

Field-marshal Schlick, after having successfully forced the passage of the Tarna at Verpelét, had immediately prepared himself for pursuing us, and disposed his left wing on the northern continuation of the ridge occupied by the Bulharin half division, his right against Kápolna, while his centre advanced straight to the interval between Pöltenberg's position and that of the Bulharin half division, or—what is equivalent—to the re-entering angle formed, as has been mentioned, by the occupied heights.

By this manœuvre Field-marshal Schlick re-established his junction with the left wing of the hostile chief army, which advanced simultaneously against us by Al-Döbrö, and arrived at the same time with it in an oblique direction against the front of the centre and of the right wing of the main army.

The hostile position formed, consequently, during the ensuing action, a line broken forward, while our position, parallel with it, described one broken backward.

Field-marshal Schlick had—judging from his ensuing dispositions for attack—very correctly perceived that, by forcing both the positions of our right wing, he should most contribute toward disengaging the centre of the Austrian main army, the further advance of which, after the successful dislodging of Dembinski from Kápolna, was very considerably impeded by our centre, which had been reinforced by the Guyon division.

He accordingly, while yet out of the reach of our guns, divided the centre likewise of his corps, employing one half in an attack on Pöltenberg's position, the other in forcing the *Kerecsend height*.

By the designation "*Kerecsend height*" is here to be understood particularly only the ridge of heights occupied by the Bulharin half division; but in the latter period of the action, its southern extremity, the summit covered with wood toward the east—therefore the extreme right wing of the battle-array of our army.

Not till after our centre should have effected its retreat over the bridge at *Kerecsend*—a retreat to which we were in fact com-



pelled in consequence of the violent and dangerous attacks of the Schlick corps on our right wing—was Pöltenberg to be allowed to retire from his hill, while the Kerecsend height had to be held to the last, to cover his own retreat.

Pöltenberg successfully accomplished his task, in spite of the repeated violent attacks of the Schlick corps. The details of its execution, however, escaped me; my attention up to the last moment of the action being chiefly engaged by the defense of the Kerecsend height.

When I—in riding back to the Kerecsend height from that point near Verpelét where I had encountered Colonels Klapka and Pöltenberg for the first time this morning, and had arranged with them what was further to be done—arrived there, the three straggling Klapka battalions which had been appointed for its defense were for the most part again assembled, and the guns of the battery of three-pounders were likewise already planted.

The Kerecsend height served the Hungarian army during the further course of the engagement as a point of support on the extreme right: it can readily be defended against an attack from the north. A hostile turning of our right could so easily be frustrated by the other half of the Bulharin division—which after the loss at Verpelét had fled toward Erlau, and which Colonel Klapka had promised again to lead against the extreme left flank of the Schlick corps—that a serious intention of attempting to turn our right could never with probability be supposed in the enemy.

In spite of this considerable advantage, the Bulharin half division seemed to me nevertheless to be insufficient for the energetic defense of the Kerecsend height; as I could not expect, judging from the former conduct of the battalions, that they would repulse the attacks of the enemy with remarkable valor, and as the incomplete battery of three-pounders would neither awe the assailant by its calibre nor by the number of its guns.

In the seventh army corps there existed, besides the often-mentioned four divisions, also a reserve, called “the column of the head-quarters.” This column—originally composed in Waizen after the evacuation of the capitals, and chiefly intended for service in the head-quarters only—consisted of two companies of grenadiers, from thirty to forty men of the German legion, and

half a squadron of hussars of different regiments not belonging to the army corps: it had subsequently received important accessions in the mountain-towns, consisting of the small remains of a battalion of Ernest infantry, which Colonel Guyon had imperilled in the street-fight with the corps of Field-marshal Simunich in the town of Tyrnau, and of two seven-pound howitzer batteries each of five pieces—which had been formed of the howitzers of the batteries of the corps, for the especial purpose of making eventual attacks on places, or in general on pieces of ground not accessible to direct shot—and finally by that part of a rocket-battery which had been taken from the enemy in the sudden attack at Igló.

This column of the head-quarters, together with the Guyon division, had advanced in the morning from Mezö-Kövesd to Kerecsend, and had been since then kept *en reserve* on the bridge westward of that place.

I now ordered the two batteries of howitzers to the Kerecsend height, and had them planted on the northern declivity of the summit.

At half gun-range before these stood the three-pounders; at a further distance of about a thousand paces, a gentle descent of the ground allowed the left wing of the enemy a covered and easy access to our ridge of heights. From this slope emerged at first a division of hostile cavalry; at sight of which the Bulharin battalions were immediately disposed to flee into the wood, which covered the whole eastern declivity of the ridge. We succeeded, however, in delaying their flight at least till the beginning of the real attack.

This division of hostile cavalry—which had evidently been advanced only for the purpose of a provisional reconnoitering of our position—was immediately driven back by the fire of our three-pounders; and this again encouraged our intimidated infantry.

Lieutenant-colonel Aristid Dessewffy, properly commander of the cavalry of the first army corps, but at that moment—I know not by what accident—remaining separated from his troops and without employment, voluntarily undertook, during the defense of the Kerecsend height, the duty of Bulharin, the helpless and inactive commander. Immediately after the division of hostile cavalry had disappeared, he proceeded with a part of the infantry

against the real column of attack, and arrested its advance over the slope to the part of the ridge where we were posted.

The enemy now directed one of his battalions from the centre to storm the Kerecsend height on its western declivity, in order to make way for the attacking-column. If the storming had succeeded, this battalion would have appeared on the height in Dessewffy's rear, in the straight line between him and our three-pounders, and, on the one hand, would have dislodged the three-pounders, whose fire could produce no effect so long as Dessewffy was posted in their front, without annoying him also; on the other hand would have obliged Dessewffy to withdraw in a lateral direction over the eastern declivity, and thus have pushed him afterward entirely out of the combat. The storming battalion, however, did not stand the fire of our howitzers, but when at the foot of the western declivity turned toward the north; and later probably joined the column which attacked Dessewffy in front, and by which he was gradually pressed back.

Meanwhile I gained time to occupy with infantry, by way of precaution, the wooded declivity of the summit—our last point of support, as has been mentioned—in case the whole ridge should be taken by the enemy. Unfortunately I had at my disposal for this purpose at that moment only those troops of the seventh army corps that could least be depended upon, namely, the Tyrol chasseurs. These, together with the Pöltenberg division, had been ordered early in the morning to Verpelét, but had taken to flight from thence by themselves, and had assembled only upon the Kerecsend height. They pleaded as their excuse, that not having bayonet-muskets, they could not stand against the attack of the hostile cavalry. I hoped they would now render so much the better service in the defense of the wooded declivity, as an attack of cavalry was not to be feared there.

Lieutenant-colonel Dessewffy with his sharp-shooters was meanwhile again so far pressed back, that the enemy from the slope could gain the top of the ridge with masses of infantry and a rocket and field-piece battery; and now the Bulharin battalions could no longer be made to keep their ground; they evacuated the whole of the ridge, running over the eastern wooded declivity down into the valley of the rivulet which, coming from Szóllát, flows by the west end of Kerecsend, where the bridge of Kerecsend joins its there elevated banks on a level with the main road



leading over it. Lieutenant-colonel Dessewffy accordingly returned *alone* to the summit, abandoned by his troops.

The forces of infantry at my disposal were thereby diminished to the few hundred Tyrol chasseurs, who, as has been mentioned, occupied the eastern wooded part of the summit. I accordingly for my reinforcement drew near me the battalion of Ernest infantry from the column of the head-quarters.

In the mean time that part of the Bulharin division in pursuit of which, after the loss of Verpelét, Colonel Klapka had hastened toward Erlau, in order to lead it once more against the enemy, unexpectedly attacked in its flank the column advancing along the ridge.

This attack in the flank, however, was speedily repulsed, and the hostile rocket and field-piece batteries were brought into action against our howitzers and three-pounders. The latter I immediately took entirely out of action, because, with their small calibre, they must have been uselessly destroyed in the unequal contest. Soon after I also withdrew the six howitzers, which had already become unfit for service, partly from want of ammunition, partly in consequence of damages they had sustained. The rest of the howitzer batteries, consisting of four pieces, had therefore to persevere alone to the end of the conflict.

The enemy now advanced to within half gun-range of our position on the summit; posted, from want of breadth in the ridge, his rocket-stands to the right (from the enemy), his battery of field-pieces to the left backward; and immediately opened a murderous fire. The rockets, little as they used formerly to injure us on the plain, produced now a literally levelling effect in sweeping over the rising arched ground.

This rendered our position—the last we had to lose—almost untenable. The Ernest battalion was just arriving on the summit; from its valor I expected considerable relief in our desperate situation. It was of the first importance to take the rocket-battery by storm, or at least to dislodge it. I dispatched the battalion by the western declivity of the summit, covered with only a few trees, that along it, protected as far as possible, it might get near the rocket-battery. But this battalion, which had recently been completed with recruits, could scarcely be brought forward above a hundred paces. It then ran away toward the valley, and withdrew between Pöltenberg's position

and the summit, out of the action. Two attempts to dislodge the rocket-battery by means of an attack with a squadron of Alexander hussars failed likewise ; while the Tyrol chasseurs at the same time evacuated the wood on the eastern declivity of the summit.

The four howitzers could maintain their position only so long as this parcel of forest remained in our possession. I consequently sent for the *last* sections of the reserve which were still at my disposal—the grenadiers and the two mixed platoons of hussars—in order to charge the former with the further maintenance of the parcel of forest, and to attempt once more with the latter to dislodge the rocket-battery.

The hussars arrived first at the howitzers. Captain Szeymond, who led them, had, however, scarcely given the word of command to attack, when a rocket-case struck him from his horse. His men refused to proceed.

The grenadiers also in the mean time had reached the height, and, ranged on the edge of the forest, awaited my orders. Some bullets from the hostile field-battery happened to pass over their heads ; and these fellows, as tall as trees, became all at once very diminutive—scarcely higher than their bear-skin caps.

This was an unfortunate *début*. But I already knew from experience, that the least obstacle thrown in the way of an enemy gains actually, as its consequence, a certain, though not always important amount of time. I therefore ordered the grenadiers, in spite of their spiritless conduct, and after some energetic reprimands for such an exaggerated reverence of the hostile bullets, to advance at a storming-pace into the wood as far as its northern edge, and hold it.

A new difficulty arose in the wood. By the first bullets, at which the grenadiers were so much frightened while still on the wooded height, they saw perfectly well the real focus of the danger, and showed no mean desire to avoid it, and go off in an eastern direction down the declivity. I remarked this just in the nick of time, quickly sprang from my horse, and, assisted by the brave officers of these troops, succeeded in bringing them at last into the right direction, the northern. Not till then did I return to the undefended part of the summit, where the howitzers stood.

Here, however, a notable mishap befell. The commander of

these howitzers, while I was occupied in the wood, had perceived the impossibility of holding out any longer, and begun the retreat over the top of the summit the more speedily, as the protection of the battery (Alexander hussars) had been forced to yield by the fire of the hostile rockets and guns. While one of the howitzers was being limbered, a projectile from the enemy struck the team, and killed one of the horses. The terrified men cut the traces of the other horses, and galloped after the pieces which had already been started.

I found the commander of the battery and the cannoneers engaged in unsuccessful efforts to push the abandoned piece up-hill. In order to get it under way, the assistance of far more men was necessary. I hastened toward the western declivity of the summit, in the hope of still finding there a part of the Ernest battalion. In their stead I found some skirmishing hussars of the Alexander regiment. A captain of this regiment was just about assembling them. I called him with his men to give assistance. Chance had made me hit on the right man; in spite of the sharp fire, he was on the spot in a twinkling with some hussars.

The enemy, however, must have remarked how matters were going on here; for his projectiles fell ever thicker about the stuck-fast howitzer. The more urgently necessary appeared to me my own presence there. The brave captain of hussars, on the contrary, was in fear for my life, and pressed me to quit the dangerous place, engaging his honor for the safety of the howitzer. This circumstance, and the simultaneous arrival of my younger brother, on whose resolute perseverance I could also rely, induced me to comply. I rode speedily across the highest point of the summit toward the southern declivity, which was secured against the enemy's fire.

During the hot conflict I had not observed what was taking place in our centre. I now saw with satisfaction that the mission of the extreme right wing was accomplished; for the centre was already wholly, and Pöltenberg partly over the bridge at Kerecsend. I was anew more anxious about the greatly endangered howitzer, and determined partly to stop Pöltenberg's retreat, and dispatch one of his battalions across the summit to its hard-pressed position. But this advance was scarcely half-executed when the brave captain of hussars appeared with the piece on the summit, and thus nobly redeemed his word of honor. He



conducted the train ; my younger brother—whose horse a bullet had killed under him—closed it ; the cannoneers, some hussars, and the ever-fearless Aristid Dessewffy drew the howitzer. The latter had suddenly arrived on the spot during my absence, and readily interested himself in its rescue.

Now that this had been effected, I immediately ordered the just-advanced battalion of the Pöltenberg division to return, and again continue its retreat over the bridge at Kerecsend ; while the grenadiers, whom the enemy had pressed down over the wooded declivity into the valley of Kerecsend, passed the rivulet above the bridge, and marched back across the fields to the northern entrance of the village.

During the combat on the Kerecsend height I had received two orders from Dembinski. One was the retarded one, intended to call me early in the morning to Verpelét to take the command of the right wing of the army ; the other contained instructions to maintain the Kerecsend height until he (Dembinski) with the centre should have effected his retreat over the Kerecsend bridge, and then to draw back to the eminence *behind* Kerecsend (east of the place).

When I reached this eminence with the Pöltenberg division and the column of the head-quarters, I found there the Kmety division, which had only shortly before arrived from Abrány. The orderly officer, charged with the marching order from Erlau to this division, had lost the road in the dark night, and reached Abrány only late in the morning ; hence the delay in the arrival of the Kmety division at Kerecsend.

Dembinski, it was said, was wounded, and had ridden to Maklár. According to the dispositions which he had issued in Kerecsend after the retreat, that division of the first army corps which had stood in the centre, and the division of the second army corps of the left wing, had already started for Mezö-Kövesd, the Guyon division to Maklár. This latter place was also designated as the station of retreat for the Pöltenberg division and the columns of the head-quarters of the seventh army corps. The Aulich division had to bivouack near Szikszó to protect the road to Mezö-Kövesd ; and the Kmety division on the eminences of Kerecsend to protect Maklár and provide for the out-post service.

Thus ended Dembinski's offensive, which he had assumed against the Austrian main army for the re-conquest of the capitals.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

DEMBINSKI had given up the second day's battle at Kápolna as lost. The reasons for this were palpable—*we had been defeated*; and the troops urgently needed a short respite, to render them again quite fit for the field, after the harassing fatigues of the day.

But to judge from their location after the battle, as stated at the end of the preceding chapter, Dembinski, with the battle, gave up at the same time all further resistance: and the more I considered the circumstances which, conspiring together, had caused the loss of the recently fought action, the less I found that *this* step was imperative.

These circumstances were:

1. The loss of Sirok on the night preceding the second day's battle, and, as a consequence of it, the junction of the Schlick corps with the hostile main army on the very field of battle, whereby a hostile force, numerically and morally superior, was brought into action with our right wing, isolated by the distance of more than a (German) mile from its centre.
2. The too late arrival on the field of almost a third of our army.
3. The separation of the divisions of one and the same army corps from each other.

1. To relieve the right wing in time was impossible, its distance from the centre and the reserve being at the first too great (even supposing that the Kmety division had reached Kerecsend early enough).

Dembinski could avoid this defect in the next position—perhaps behind Kerecsend, as I supposed—in which he might intend to withstand the enemy.

2. The too late arrival of the Kmety division left the army without a strong, sufficient reserve.

The army being now concentrated, Dembinski had no longer to fear this disadvantage in the next engagement.

3. By the dismemberment of the different army corps, bodies of troops quite strange to each other were brought into close contact during the conflict, none of the divisions knowing in what degree they could rely on the steadfastness of the divisions near them on their right and left ; a circumstance which can not be overlooked with impunity. By this dismemberment of the different army corps, half of the first corps was also deprived of the skillful guidance of Klapka, and I was obliged to command a portion of his troops, which were stranger to me than those of the enemy, and that at a time when they had to perform extraordinary duty ; whereas such services can be secured only by the personal influence of a commander familiar with the peculiarities of the troop.

Dembinski, taught by the disastrous consequences of his unskillful experiment of separating, could easily reunite the different army corps before the next combat, and then confidently expect far more from their conduct on the field of battle.

I found accordingly—as has been said—the entire abandonment of all resistance nothing less than commanded.

On the contrary, there existed circumstances which most decidedly encouraged to the resolute continuance of the combat on the next day. These circumstances were :

The behavior of *our* troops *during* the battle, and that of the *enemy* *after* it.

This behavior had been throughout surprisingly good. Disorders had occurred—but only as the exceptions—under my personal command, in the extreme right wing of the army, namely, on the Kerecsend height : these, however, were sufficiently excused, partly by the fact that the commander and troops were strangers to each other ; partly because some bodies of the troops—as, for instance, the battalion of Ernest infantry (which had been filled up only a fortnight ago with quite raw recruits), the grenadiers, and the two platoons of mixed hussars—stood fire for the first time on that day ; and partly by the greatness of the task which I had assigned to the troops. Even these disorders were only of short duration, and the shaken ranks for the most part could easily be restored to order, even within reach of the hostile fire. It seemed as if the days of Schwechat, Parendorf, Bábolna, and Hodrics would never again return !

The behavior of *the enemy* *after* the battle, on the contrary,



evinced no trace of that consciousness of victory, which subsequently found such highly poetical expression in the famous bulletin of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz.

The sun of the 27th of February 1849 stood yet pretty high in the heavens when the last thunder of cannon at Kápolna had long died away, and the victor nevertheless declined any pursuit; in spite of the strong inducement thereto furnished by Dembinski's dispositions.

Was not this a silent *Te Deum* for the permission at last quietly to take breath over the dear-bought laurels of victory?

The heroically bold Schlick, to whom alone, without reservation, belongs the honor of the day, had advanced the foremost against us; but even *he*, after he had occupied the Kerecsend height, evacuated by our right wing, uttered a distinct "Enough for to-day," and made his troops immediately prepare their bivouac-fires before our eyes.

(And no wonder! He had, during the last twenty-four hours, been obliged to travel with his brave corps a distance of fully six (German) miles; on his way to force three positions; and beside to take in tow the Field-marshal together with the chief army. A handsome stroke of work this! In the end, the Schlick corps would perhaps also have to pursue; while the chief army, which during the same time had scarcely gained half a mile of ground, allowed itself quietly to dream something about the "total destruction" of the rebels?)

But a conqueror, *who, after victory*, even when invited by circumstances, *does not pursue*, places himself involuntarily on an almost equal moral level with the vanquished. Such a one *after* the victory is absolutely *not* more formidable than *before* it.

Field-marshal Windischgrätz after the battle of Kápolna was such a conqueror: and on this very account it seemed to me that Dembinski's dispositions, for retrograding after the battle in such headlong haste, were, considering the surprisingly good behavior of our troops, not only uncalled for but decidedly blamable.

They were, however, already for the most part executed when I was informed of them; and although the Kmety division urged me again and again, Dembinski being wounded, to take the chief command and annul his insulting dispositions, it could not very well be done. I should by such a step have been guilty of unjustifiable precipitancy. Colonel Kmety could not help soon

perceiving this himself, and promised to yield to what for the present was unavoidable. I then rode to Maklár to seek for Dembinski, and learn the nature of his wound.

I inquired a long time in vain for his lodging. Several were pointed out to me, which had been destined for Dembinski and his suite; but in none of them could the commander-in-chief at that moment be found; every where it was said he had just been there.

That I might the sooner discover his abode, I left officers of my suite in each of the quarters indicated, charging them as soon as Dembinski should arrive in one of them to forward information of it to me without delay to a certain specified point in the place.

This measure caused a misunderstanding. Dembinski thought, when, on returning to the place which he had selected for himself, he found one of my orderly officers there, that I had left meanwhile somebody to retain it for myself, and received me with bitter reproaches about this presumed arrogance on my part, since to him, the commander-in-chief, were due the most commodious quarters, and so on.

But I intended just then to establish my head-quarters in the bivouac of the Kmety division, and therefore naturally could not for a long time understand Dembinski's fracas.

Dembinski's wound did not seem to be mortal.

His further dispositions were: the troops should proceed with their cooking, and the whole army return on the following morning to Mezö-Kövesd.—The troops would very willingly have cooked, if they had but had something to cook.

Notwithstanding my subordination to Dembinski's chief command, I had taken care from the first that the regular supplies of the seventh army corps should be through its own intendancy; while the support of Dembinski's whole army had been transferred to the government commissary-in-chief, Bartholomäus von Szemere, who was invested with unlimited powers.

This non-central system of support brought the military organised supply-branch of the seventh army corps into frequent conflict with Szemere's officials, and occasioned the peremptory decree of the commander-in-chief, that in future the separate divisions of the army should receive their provisions directly from Szemere.

Now Szemere was deemed, and not undeservedly, an administrative genius; for he managed the supplies of Dembinski's army at least so ingeniously that the troops almost perished of hunger.

Accordingly their discontent with Dembinski's mode of warfare naturally soon rose to the highest pitch; for the vote of distrust, which he had by his premature retreat called forth against himself, was subscribed by many thousand empty stomachs so much the more willingly, and with a severe clause, because the conviction was general among the army, that he never, never forgot the filling of his own belly.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

The night between the 27th and 28th of February, which followed the second day of the battle of Kápolna, passed without disturbance.

Early in the morning of the 28th all the divisions of the army marched back to Mezö-Kövesd. The Kmety division formed the rear-guard. A considerable hostile column of cavalry followed close at its heels.

Dembinski ordered the camp to be pitched at the west end of Mezö-Kövesd *à cheval* of the road to Kerecsend. To the south of it the Pöltenberg division stood next, then the first army corps, and on the extreme left wing one division of the second army corps. To the north of the road the Guyon division was established next, and on the extreme right wing the Aulich division.

Between Mezö-Kövesd and Maklár a broad plateau, slightly elevated above the southern plains, extends from northwest to southeast. The village of Szihalom stands partly on its southwestern gradual declivity. From this plateau the ground flattens undulatingly toward Mezö-Kövesd, and is intersected by separate, deeply sunk veins of water in an almost perpendicular direction with the road from Szihalm on to Kövesd. The ground slopes in the same manner along the Erlau road toward Mezö-Kövesd.



Our camp in front of this place was consequently commanded direct by those two sides, from which a hostile attack mainly threatened us, and, notwithstanding the veins of water winding to and fro in our front, it was destitute of the most essential advantages of a *defensive* position; while, on the other hand, our capability for the offensive was not a little embarrassed by those very veins of water.

Dembinski in the choice of this camp was probably laboring under the fixed idea, *that the enemy, satisfied for the time being with our retreat as far as Mezö-Kövesd, on this day would undertake nothing more against us.* The circumstance, that neither the further line of retreat had been specified, nor any instructions issued how to proceed in case of being attacked, betrayed, with still greater certainty the present prevalence of that fixed idea in Dembinski.

And thus all the conditions necessary for the success of a hostile surprise in broad daylight were fulfilled on our part as sufficiently as possible.

This attack we had not long to wait for.

The Kmety division, shortly before its arrival within gun-range of the camp, was all at once very vehemently assailed by the hostile column which had only observed it close at hand for a long time, and was in parts thrown back upon the surprised camp itself.

I was on my way to Dembinski's head-quarters, to disabuse him, if possible, of the above-mentioned fixed idea, when the first firing of artillery, by which the onset announced itself, anticipated my intention.

Dembinski, however, was just at dinner, and, through the welcome clattering of plates and glasses in his immediate vicinity, failed to hear the less agreeable thunder of cannon from afar. My oral announcement of the hostile attack consequently found him wholly unprepared; nevertheless he hastened immediately to the point of danger; myself—delayed by the awkwardness of a hussar to whom I had entrusted my horse—a few minutes after him.

On the western outlet of Mezö-Kövesd a bridge has to be crossed. On it I encountered a half-battery of the Kmety division in hasty flight. The commander of this battery solemnly protested that the whole camp had been scattered, and that he had only

very narrowly succeeded in saving his guns. The poor man was so terrified, he could no longer trust his own eyes ; otherwise he, as well as myself, might have been convinced by one glance from the bridge in the direction of the camp, that the danger was by no means so great as he represented it. I ordered his battery to halt and return.

About a thousand paces from Mezö-Kövesd, on the other side of a second bridge, over which the road from Mezö-Kövesd to Szihalom and Kerecsend leads, I found the Kmety, Guyon, and Aulich divisions drawn up in battle-array, and the cavalry of the last division (the ninth regiment of hussars) just returning from a successful attack ; while the Pöltenberg division, the first army corps, and the isolated division of the second, joined speedily the advancing right wing.

The enemy had already hastened as far back as the elevation of Szihalom, and watched from thence, with great self-denial, the successful efforts of some hussars to get under way the half-battery which had been taken from him by the ninth regiment of hussars, and bring it to our front, a gun-range and a half further back.

But Dembinski, in very bad humor, probably in consequence of his interrupted dinner, inveighed continually—not perhaps against the enemy, but against our advancing, called the successful attack a piece of stupidity, and finally ordered—when the repetition of similar outpourings had been rendered disagreeable to him by the pithy answers of some hussar officers—for the whole front of the army a thoughtful “Halt !”

He then made us await nightfall where we were. The enemy, in his turn, might now indulge in the same reflections on us as we had lately done on him, when he had suffered a few hussars to carry off his guns under his very nose.

It is already known, from what has preceded, that Colonel Guyon was suddenly attacked in the night between the 2d and 3d of February at Igló by a column of the Schlick corps, on which occasion a piece of artillery was taken from him. This gun, the capture of which by the enemy Colonel Guyon had constantly denied, it so chanced was now one of the three pieces just taken by us. The former assertion of Guyon, *that the missing cannon must have lost its way in the woods of Igló, amid the general confusion which occurred during the surprise*, could—in spite of the contradictory circumstance, that this cannon had really been in the enemy's possession—out of respect for

Guyon's well-known love of truth, of course not be doubted; and there consequently arose about the cannon, missing since the day at Igló, the dark suspicion *that it had there been withdrawn from the Guyon division with a treacherous intent, and delivered to the Schlick corps, which a week later was retreating from Kaschau by Torna and Tonalja!*—This supposition may be thought absurd; however, every country has its own customs! In my country the *supposition of some treachery* is the common favorite formula according to which the most natural *unpleasant* occurrences are analysed in a piquantly-mystical manner, which also incidentally *tickles the national vanity*.

One fine day the *Közlöny*—evidently with the intention of rendering one of my personal opponents popular in the country—had dithyrambically reported, that Guyon at Igló (just during that fatal night between the 2d and 3d of February) had utterly annihilated the enemies of the fatherland. *How then could it have been possible for the DESTROYED to take a cannon from their DESTROYER?*

I have mentioned above an officer of artillery, whom I had encountered with his battery in wild flight on the bridge of Mezö-Kövesd, immediately after the commencement of the hostile attack on our camp. I ordered him to be shot for the crime of cowardice, of which he had been guilty by his flight, and intended to have the sentence executed *in flagranti*, as a warning example, in front of the division to which he belonged. Dembinski, however, from whom, as he was present, I had previously to obtain permission for the execution of the sentence, pardoned the delinquent.

Another otherwise brave officer, of the first army corps, happened shortly before the hostile attack to have got drunk, and in this state had made unlawful booty. When attempted to be arrested, he resisted arms in hand, and thereby lost his life, being pierced by the balls of the escort.

Darkness had meanwhile set in; Dembinski retired to rest. Soon afterward the troops also were allowed to re-occupy their former encampments, and those divisions could now cook, to which fate, under the guise of Szemere and his commissaries of supply, had by way of exception, been favorable during the day. The rest were obliged previously to solicit contributions, but with indifferent success; for the patriots of Mezö-Kövesd were wise, prudent people.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE morning of the 1st of March found us still in the camp at Mezö-Kövesd, full of fasting resignation to Dembinski's will, which had not yet been pronounced. Toward midday it was at last made known.

"*In order to secure to the troops*"—so it was said in the introduction to the dispositions for this day—" *the time necessary for their refreshment, cantonments are assigned to them.*" These cantonments were:

For the whole first army corps, and the isolated division of the second corps, Eger-Farmos ;

For the Aulich division, Lövö ;

For the Kmety and Pöltenberg divisions, Szent-István ;

For the Guyon division, Négyes.

As these cantonment-stations—only two, three, the furthest four hours' march, Eger-Farmos scarcely half an hour more from the hostile camp than Mezö-Kövesd—were situated in a plain as easily accessible to the enemy as to us ; and as by transferring our army into them a hostile attack seemed at most to be delayed only for *the time* which the enemy needed to *find out one or the other cantonment-station and to reach it* ; and as we could not suppose that Dembinski by the rest and refreshment which were promised to the troops in the new cantonments meant merely that which would *last for a few hours*,—we could not at once comprehend *how* these dispositions would answer the object for which they had been intended, according to the introduction. On the contrary, the apprehension that our position in these cantonments might become *incomparably more perilous than in Mezö-Kövesd* was awakened by the most superficial comparison of both situations.

However few the advantages offered for defense by the camp at Mezö-Kövesd, the army was at least *united* there, not so dismembered, and moreover stronger by the Kmety division, than on the last day of the battle of Kápolna.

An attack on the part of the enemy, even if executed with his whole force, had here—the relation of mutual strength mainly considered—less chance than at Kápolna. And even if victory should again be on the side of the enemy, there still remained to our general-in-chief the possibility of obviating a greater misfortune by timely dispositions.

The cantonments which we were to occupy, on the contrary, *dismembered* the army.

If the enemy intended to attack us in Mező-Kövesd, as Dembinski's introduction to this disposition tacitly presupposed, then the already-mentioned *distances* of the cantonment-stations at Szent-István, Lövö, and Eger-Farmos, *from Mező-Kövesd* were not great enough to prevent him from a further advance against one of them. No matter which he attacked, he could secure to himself but too easy a victory; while our commander-in-chief, through the great distance of the separate divisions of the army from each other, as well as from his head-quarters in Poroszló, was utterly unable, after a hostile attack *had once commenced*, to make dispositions *time enough* to avert a serious disaster. The dispositions for the cantonments, however, did not contain a syllable of any *precautionary* measure in case of such an attack, not even a point of junction or of retreat was indicated in them.

This defect in the dispositions was the more striking as, with the simultaneous removal of the first army corps and the isolated division of the second corps to Eger-Farmos, it could no longer be the result of the fixed idea, *that the enemy certainly would not attack the cantonments*. The circumstance that Eger-Farmos, the cantonment-station which was situated *nearest* to the enemy, had, in comparison with the others, been occupied in such *remarkable strength*, pointed directly to the fact that the thought of forming a *strong rear-guard* had been influential in bringing about these dispositions. *This* thought, however, could have originated only in the *supposition of a hostile attack*; while, on the contrary, this supposition was flatly contradicted by the *carelessness* with which the beginning of the eccentric retreat from Mező-Kövesd into the cantonments had been delayed till full midday, and thus this manœuvre, which could so easily have been accomplished unobserved under the veil of the past night or the fog of the morning, had been exposed to the spying looks of the enemy's advanced troops in Szihalom.

To these enigmatical contradictions we found *no* solution ; and as our confidence in Dembinski had moreover been already shaken, we could not greatly enjoy the thought of the "promised rest and refreshment," when we broke up about midday of the 1st of March from the camp of Mezö-Kövesd for the cantonments.

My head-quarters closely adjoined the Pöltenberg and Kmety divisions, which were ordered to Szent-István.

About two hours before nightfall the promised rest and refreshment was disturbed by a vehement and continuous thundering of artillery, which penetrated to us from the direction of Eger-Farmos.

Colonel Klapka—who was located in this place with the whole first army corps and the isolated division of the second corps—had been attacked ; and, considering the proximity of the united hostile army, there was no reason for supposing but that this attack had been made with far superior forces. Under these circumstances it was to be feared that Colonel Klapka would be defeated, and pressed back toward Poroszló, and that consequently the Aulich division in Lövö would be endangered ; and it was my duty to prevent, if possible, these calamities, by ordering the Pöltenberg and Kmety divisions to advance without a moment's delay to Eger-Farmos. I could execute this duty the easier as Szent-István was of no strategic importance at all to us.

The shortest and, as we were assured, best way from this place to Eger-Farmos is through Lövö ; but this *best* way was impracticable.

We had scarcely advanced halfway when the thunder of cannon from Eger-Farmos suddenly ceased. Klapka's defeat, as well as the advanced darkness, might be the cause of this ; the greater was the necessity for hastening our march. But all our efforts were rendered abortive by the accumulation of obstacles which impeded our progress on this road, almost impassable during this season.

In front of Lövö we had to cross the Kánya brook, which had overflowed its banks. The darkness of the night and the depth of the water rendered unavoidable the use of a good many precautionary measures, which took up time. Not till after midnight was our passage completely effected, and the Aulich, Pöltenberg, and Kmety divisions again reunited.



Some of our troops stationed at Eger-Farmos had reached Lövö several hours earlier. From these we now learned, that on the road from Szihalom through Szemere the enemy had continually flanked Colonel Klapka's march from Mezö-Kövesd to Eger-Farmos, and had attacked him most violently with artillery immediately after his arrival at Eger-Farmos; but that, after an obstinate resistance, he had retreated toward Poroszló, whereby these sections of troops, being separated from their main body, had been obliged to fall back on Lövö.

This information decided me to break up the camp at Lövö after a short rest, and to march back with the Aulich, Pöltenberg, and Kmety divisions by Ivánka toward Poroszló, sending at the same time an order to the Guyon division in Négyes to do the same.

How fatigued and weary soever the troops might have been when Dembinski sent them at midday of the 1st of March, 1849, from the camp of Mezö-Kövesd for their refreshment into the cantonments of Négyes, Szent-István, Lövö, and Eger-Farmos, the rest they found there was so *quickly* refreshing, that they were already enabled early on the morning of the 2d of March, 1849, —invigorated in the highest degree! ?—to reunite themselves in Poroszló.

Eighteen short hours had sufficed to place in the clearest light the geniality of the theory, according to which Dembinski had projected, in the golden-mouthed\* morning-hour of the 1st of March, 1849, the *refreshment* dispositions for his—by the way be it said—more HUNGRY than *fatigued* army. This theory is naturally developed from these dispositions, as follows :

“ *The rest necessary for re-invigorating a defeated army is secured by occupying dispersed cantonments in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's operations, IN A PLAIN, OF WHICH THE INTERSECTIONS OF THE GROUND DO NOT PERHAPS OBSTRUCT A VICTORIOUS ENEMY IN HIS ADVANCE, BUT CERTAINLY EMBARRASS THE JUNCTION OF THE PARTS OF AN ARMY WHICH ARE SEPARATELY CANTONING.*”

Or, in other terms, and at the same time applicable to the present case :

\* “The hours of the morning have their mouth full of gold,” a German proverb, which has its equivalent in the English, “Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”—*Transl.*

"If an already defeated army, which continues still exposed to the attacks of the enemy, is to be secured against them, separate it—IF POSSIBLE, UNDER THE ENEMY'S EYES—into from four to five parts, more or less equal to each other, and CONFIDENTLY distribute these separate parts into the near surrounding places, several hours distant from each other, between which places there exist in part no communications at all, in part such as are practicable only with uncommon difficulty; FOR IN A CIVILIZED ENEMY THERE CAN ALWAYS WITH CERTAINTY BE ASSUMED TO BE SO MUCH OF GOOD-BREEDING AS THAT, AT ONCE RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE EMINENTLY PEACEFUL INTENTIONS OF HIS ADVERSARY, HE WILL INSTANTLY CEASE FROM THE OFFENSIVE."

Field-marshal Windischgrätz had in fact justified such a flattering supposition by the remarkable *moderation* with which he pursued us *only* on the day *after* the battle of Kápolna, and even then with forces so *small* that it was *not at all difficult* for us to repulse their attack without inconvenience—as has been already mentioned—and, at the same time, take from them three guns. Prince Windischgrätz afterward also proved himself not quite unworthy of such a flattering supposition, since he again attacked *with forces not superior* our three divisions, which were moving before his eyes to Eger-Farmos; whereby, of course, was caused Klapka's retreat by night to Poroszló, which, though somewhat inconvenient it is true, was otherwise almost without loss.

Or could what Dembinski took for the *courteous good-breeding* of Prince Windischgrätz have been only the expression—in spite of the days of Kápolna—of continued *contempt for his adversary*? Could neither the days of Kápolna, nor that of Mező-Kövesd have sufficed to correct that disdainful opinion of the importance of our resistance, for which indeed sufficient grounds had been furnished at first by the great retreat from the Lajtha to beyond the Danube, and the simultaneous reports of victory circulated by the Committee of Defense?

Whatever may be the answers to these questions, the short campaign between Windischgrätz and Dembinski, since the second day of the battle of Kápolna, had now assumed on both sides the character of what is called at drafts a "losing-game." It is well known that this game is won by *the player who FIRST gets rid of all his men*. To this end, his endeavor is, to move his men *always unprotected* in front of those of his adversary,

*that they may be taken.* Both commanders proved themselves *very adroit* at this. Thus did Field-marshal Windischgrätz, on the 28th of February, at Mezö-Kövesd; thus did General Dembinski on the day after, the 1st of March, at Eger-Farmos. But the *latter* was unmistakably *master*, and would most certainly have won—that is, would have *first lost* all his draftsmen—unless the fit had suddenly come upon them, at first by *arbitrary* moves to spoil the losing-game, which in the cantonments stood so extremely favorable for Dembinski, and finally even to turn out their lord and master; and all this simply because they (Dembinski's draftsmen) had taken into their heads the notion that with them only a *WINNING game* should be played.

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### CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN I arrived, early in the morning of the 2d of March, with the Aulich, Pöltenberg, and Kmety divisions, at Poroszló, Colonel Klapka informed me, that in consequence of Dembinski's dispositions of the preceding evening for cantonment, the commanders of the three divisions under his (Klapka's) command in Eger-Farmos, had declared, in the name of their officers, that they would no longer receive any order from Dembinski, unless it was counter-signed either by himself (Klapka) or by me. The commanders of these divisions (Dessewffy in the stead of Bulharin) immediately afterward repeated the same declaration to me in person, Klapka being present.

Dembinski had, before my arrival at Poroszló, ordered the three divisions united under Klapka to retreat without delay behind the Theiss. Conformably to this order they were just about to march, when their commanders informed me of this desire to metamorphose the *absolute* commander-in-chief Dembinski into a *constitutional* one.

But I could not suppose it possible that such experienced soldiers as Colonel Klapka and his three commanders of division were in earnest in proposing the *application of the constitutional principle to the command of an army during war*; and took



this request simply for a *consilium abeundi*, which was to be laid before the commander-in-chief Dembinski. But as such an extraordinary measure required at least the concurrence of an overwhelming majority of the army; and as the four divisions of the seventh army corps—consequently more than one half of the army—had not yet refused obedience to the commander-in-chief; and as I was moreover of opinion that such an important step ought *not to be taken in too much haste*—with Klapka's consent, I called upon these three commanders of division to comply for the present *unconditionally* with Dembinski's arrangements, until the retreat of the whole army behind the Theiss, which seemed just then to be his intention, should have been accomplished, when they would have an opportunity of deliberately consulting upon the subject.

The commanders of division declared themselves willing to do so, and returned to their troops, as did also Colonel Klapka; while I hastened to Dembinski's head-quarters, to announce to him the arrival of the Aulich, Pöltenberg, and Kmety divisions in Poroszló, and obtain his further orders for them.

Dembinski received me very ungraciously; talked of not knowing how to obey, of running away from every hostile cannon-ball; declared that it had not been *his* plan to return again behind the Theiss, but that *we forced* him to do so, and that for this reason he had already ordered the retreat. The seventh army corps had immediately to follow Klapka's divisions.

Having been dismissed with this injunction, I hastened to appoint places where the seventh army corps should encamp (the Guyon division also had meanwhile arrived from Négyes), until Klapka's divisions, on their retreat from Poroszló over the Theiss, should be far enough in advance not to embarrass the marching of the seventh army corps in their rear.

Dembinski at the same time removed his head-quarters to Tiszafüred. I did not see him again on the right bank of the Theiss.

Besides the seventh army corps, six squadrons of cavalry belonging to the second corps were also at the same time in Poroszló. They belonged to that army division which the commander-in-chief, during his just-terminated offensive operation, had left behind in Poroszló and Tiszafüred, to secure the passage across the Theiss between these two places; and, according to

Dembinski's last dispositions, were to remain in Poroszló to observe the enemy, even after the retreat of the seventh army corps behind the Theiss had been effected.

I was just ready to commence the retreat, when the enemy, advancing toward Poroszló on the road from Besenyő, suddenly began to deploy before us in scarcely stronger force than our own.

At first he seemed as if he intended to attempt an attack on our camp.

Considering the fatal characteristics of our line of retreat, retreat for the moment could not be thought of.

This line consisted of a causeway, just wide enough to allow two vehicles to pass each other. The Theiss had already overflowed; this causeway was the sole communication between Poroszló and the bridge over the Theiss.

Poroszló is a locality stretching from north to south, and lying on an elevation, which limits westward the extent of inundation on the right bank of the Theiss, here above a league in breadth. This elevation slopes steeply toward the east, and forms at the same time the right bank of the brook Cserö, the left bank of which is situated in the inundated ground itself, across which the causeway leads to the bridge over the Theiss, which is about a league further off. The connection of the causeway with the elevation commanding it, and on which Poroszló stands, is effected by means of a wooden bridge, resting on piles, over the brook Cserö

The clear space between the eastern row of houses of Poroszló and the slope of the bank of the brook Cserö admits of batteries being planted, which, the causeway lying in a vertical direction with this row of houses, would command it (the causeway) lengthways, and expose it to a cross-fire; consequently the troops retreating on it could be literally *swept down*, without any possibility being presented to them of planting more than one gun—namely, on the causeway itself—against the hostile batteries, which gun would then evidently have to form the extreme rear-guard.

Poroszló, in its breadth—in the direction from west to east—is intersected by several streets. One of them opens on to the clear space, between the right bank of the Cserö and the eastern front of the houses, exactly opposite the bridge; the other streets open, part of them above, part below the bridge.

The seventh army corps remained, as has been said, still in the camp before the long western boundary of the place, when the enemy deployed in our front at about gun-range and a half distance. The view was unobstructed ; *our retreat could not be masked.*

To begin such a retreat under the eyes of the enemy must invite him to attack, and to immediate pursuit.

While of all the streets which intersect the place in its breadth, we could make use of only *that one* which opens opposite the causeway, if we would avoid obstacles incalculable in their consequences, occasioned by the concourse of several retreating columns immediately before the bridge ; the enemy, by advancing through the other streets, could reach the clear space before the eastern front of the houses simultaneously with our last section, plant his guns in the direction of the causeway, and *sans gêne* begin the work of destruction. In doing so, the *direct* injury which his fire would have caused to us would have been not at all comparable to what would have ensued in consequence of the *thronging* on the narrow causeway. I feared that in the chaotic confusion I should be forced to see several guns and ammunition-chests tumbling down over the slopes of the road ; and I preferred to accept where I was even an unequal contest, and defend myself to the last, than to begin the retreat under such untoward circumstances.

The first offensive advance of the enemy was followed by a similar movement on our part ; the suspension of our advance by the falling back of the hostile vanguard. After which both parties contented themselves with observing each other during the day.

Late in the afternoon, a patrol of hussars, which had been sent out in the direction of Heves, returned with some prisoners, lancers, whom the commander of the hostile column in Heves had charged with a despatch "to the royal imperial Field-marshal Lieutenant Count Wr̄bna in Poroszló." The contents of this despatch informed us that we had no hostile attack to fear from Heves.

In my suite there served as courier, among others, a harmless Lo-Preszti hussar. This remarkable troop was distinguished principally by its *red cloaks*. The harmless fellow felt cold, and was enveloped in his cloak, when the lancers were brought in. Where-



upon one of them took the red-cloaked Lo-Preszti hussar for the executioner, who—so the tale ran in the hostile camp—used first to cut off the ears of the prisoners, and after a while their heads also. The brave lancer, at the mere sight of the red Lo-Preszti hussar, was now naturally seized with the gallows-fever, and recovered only after being well recruited by means of bacon, bread, and wine.

There was no longer any prospect of our being attacked in the course of the day. The enemy before us seemed to feel himself too weak, and intended to await reinforcements, which might arrive during the night.

We were consequently obliged to effect the delayed retreat under cover of night, in order to avoid the danger of an *overpowering* attack, which was to be expected next day.

I issued the orders necessary for this purpose, and reported to Dembinski the cause of the delay.

The second hour after midnight was fixed for leaving the camp. *Before* midnight, however, I received, in answer to my report, Dembinski's order to remain in Poroszló with the seventh army corps during the next day also, and accept a combat, in case the enemy should attack.

Dembinski evidently wished to try his luck once more at the "losing game," and that with the seventh army corps alone. But I had no desire for such a game; and declared to Dembinski, in a special letter—after a concise review of the principal points in his career till now as commander-in-chief—

That this order appeared to me to have for its object to expose to useless slaughter the best Hungarian corps; a corps for the preservation of which I, as its commander, was responsible to the country;—that the favorable opportunities for striking decisive blows had been neglected by him (Dembinski) at Tornalja, Kerecsend (immediately after the battle of Kápolna), and Mezö-Kövesd;—that the present position of the seventh corps, with a long open, indefensible defile in its rear, was badly adapted for accepting a serious combat, by which he seemed now suddenly to be anxious to make up for lost time;—that the corps must, on the contrary, be saved as quickly as possible from this dangerous position;—but that this was only possible by the retreat *during the night*, which I had already ordered; and that I was ready to answer before a council of war for this act of disobedience.

Before daybreak of the third of March I had already quitted Poroszló with the seventh army corps, and left behind me there, in order to observe the enemy, only the six squadrons of cavalry of the second army corps.

I reached without interruption the left bank of the Theiss. The hostile corps, however, the attacks of which I thought to avoid by this retreat during the night, had at the same time marched back from Poroszló to Besenyö ; and thus once more the one had been in fear of the other, and both again without reason.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

THE decided vote of want of confidence in Dembinski on the part of the commanders of division under Klapka had in the meantime found the most lively echo in the divisions of the seventh army corps. The army was thus already in fact *without a leader*.

General Répásy, commander of the second army corps, and Colonel Klapka, perceived, as well as myself, that this state of the army could not continue long without endangering the country.

We therefore, without constraint, agreed to lose no time in assembling the staff-officers of the divisions of our corps that were not then on service, to deliberate *how this condition might most judiciously be remedied* ; but to invite the government commissary-in-chief, Bartholomäus von Szemere, to take part in the consultation, *that even the APPEARANCE of the army conspiring against the government might be avoided*.

The conclusion to which this assembly of staff-officers came, as well as the reasons for the resolution, may be briefly summed up as follows :

That to beat the enemy, and yet endure hunger, might be put up with. To be beaten by the enemy, but at least to have afterward enough to eat and drink, might perhaps also be tolerable. But to be repeatedly beaten, and moreover endure hunger as well

as all imaginable fatigues, was too bad, and could no longer be borne.

That Lieutenant-general Dembinski—especially by the manner in which he, as commander-in-chief, had conducted his offensive intended for the reconquest of the capitals—had brought all these calamities on the army, and in consequence had forfeited *forever* its confidence.

The representative of the government, Bartholomäus von Szemere, who was present, was consequently requested to take suitable measures for *removing Lieutenant-general Dembinski from the chief command of the army*; and for transferring it—until the definite appointment of Dembinski's successor—to one of the commanders of army corps present.

In order to let Szemere be completely free in the choice of a commander-in-chief *ad interim*, I declared beforehand that I had no objection whatever to his appointing to the temporary chief command either of my young comrades, Répásy or Klapka. But both of them, on their part, judging it fitting that the provisional command of the army should be entrusted to *me*, as being in rank the eldest commander of a corps—there was no longer any choice left to Szemere; and he consulted with me as to the way in which, with the least offense, Dembinski could be removed from the chief command.

We thought to proceed in the most delicate way by Szemere's immediately inviting the commander-in-chief by letter to avoid the bitter pill intended for him, by a voluntary retiring from his post, and to transmit to him (Szemere), in a confidential way, his journal of operations, together with the rest of the protocols.

Dembinski, however, either did not believe in the possibility of being removed in consequence of a simple vote of want of confidence on the part of the army, or he hoped to gain the crown of martyrdom; for he positively would not hear of a voluntary retirement. It seemed likewise possible that he doubted the genuineness of the vote of want of confidence on the part of the army, and considered it to be merely forged, perhaps by me. He had consequently in the first place to be entirely freed from *this illusion*.

To this end, Szemere, accompanied by Répásy, Klapka, and myself, and, unless I am mistaken, also by Aulich and the chief



of the general staff of the seventh army corps, went next day to Dembinski's head-quarters.

But that no conciliatory means might be left untried, Szemere saw Dembinski at first *alone*, and announced to him beforehand *what* awaited him next moment, if he should continue to refuse voluntarily to lay down the staff of command.

This measure also having been unsuccessful, Szemere summoned us—who had meantime been waiting in the ante-chamber—to enter likewise, and then declared to Dembinski in our presence, that the army had no longer any confidence in his command and that he could not fail to perceive how the want of this confidence paralyzed his further efficiency as commander-in-chief.

Dembinski seemed to be laboring under the supposition that all this had for its object less the removing him from the chief command than the satisfying our eager desire for the disclosure of his plan of operations, which had formed the basis of his unsuccessful offensive, and which was carefully kept secret by him: for the substance of his answer to Szemere's declaration was the following reminiscence of that campaign to which he owes his ante-March, Conversationslexicon celebrity:

"One day during my retreat in Lithuania," thus Dembinski began his tale, "my officers came to me, and desired to know whither I was leading them. Gentlemen, I replied, do you see my cap here?"

Hereupon Dembinski actually seized his indoor-cap, and put it on his head.

"If I could suppose," he continued, proceeding with his answer to the said officers, "that this cap had any perception of what I think, and whither I am leading you" (the officers in Lithuania, not us), "I would throw it on the ground and trample it under my feet, and in future go about without a cap."

With this Dembinski tore the poor cap off his head again, crumpled it up for awhile in evident indignation, and threw it mercilessly on the ground.

He must give us the same answer—he hereupon intimated—so often as we should ask him about his plan of operations.

Dembinski here plainly overlooked how essentially different his position was *with respect to us* from what it had been *with respect to the officers in Lithuania*.

These officers wished only to know whither he was leading

them; we knew already *WHITHER he had led us*—namely, into the sauce.\*

These only doubted of his capacity as a general; we *no longer doubted of the* CONTRARY.

These were still willing to follow him on certain conditions; we *no longer on* ANY WHATEVER.

I strongly suspect that in Dembinski it was only “the vanity of authorship” which led him to cite to us, so *mal à propos*, his smart answer to these officers.

After a long discussion, without result, between Dembinski and Szemere, during which the honor of spokesman on our part was left to the latter exclusively, this scene terminated with Dembinski’s repeated declaration, that he would *not* voluntarily retire—whereupon we took our leave.

Szemere, however, had now to bite the sour apple, and, by virtue of his unlimited power, officially to inform Lieutenant-general Dembinski that he must without delay give up the chief command of the army to me.

As soon as I was convinced that Dembinski had received this order from Szemere, I charged the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps to take possession of the registers of the service, which were kept at the quarters of the chief command. Dembinski, however, had taken them meanwhile under his own charge, and obstinately refused to give them up. The chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps took up the matter in good earnest, and placed a guard at Dembinski’s door.

I quite approved of this measure, and immediately informed the government commissary-in-chief, Szemere, of Dembinski’s arrest. Szemere had not been prepared for this turn of affairs, declared that he did not at all agree to Dembinski’s being arrested, and immediately set him at liberty.

Next day the President Kossuth, with the war-minister Mészáros and Field-marshal Lieutenant Vetter, arrived at Tisza-füred.

For Szemere had reported to Debreczin—undoubtedly immediately after the arrival of my last letter from Poroszló to Dembinski—that mutiny had broken out in the army.

Even before Szemere’s letter, two staff-officers, dispatched by Klapka and myself, had arrived at Debreczin, in order to open

\* *i. e.* into the very jaws of destruction.—*Transl.*

the eyes of the government as to the chief causes of the doubtful progress of our war-operations.

The government took this step for an omen confirming Sze-mere's report.

Hence Kossuth's speedy journey from Debreczin to Tiszafüred.

Now commenced a lengthened examination of the staff-officers of the army. The point of it was directed against me.

Mészáros and Vetter discharged the functions of judicial examiners.

My letter from Poroszló to Dembinski did *not* appear in itself *sufficient* reason for instituting proceedings against me; while, nevertheless, a notable satisfaction was desired to be given to Dembinski.

He had probably—just as he did before me on the morning of the 2d of March in Poroszló, so now in Tiszafüred before Kossuth and his colleagues—thrown the blame of his (Dembinski's) retreat behind the Theiss on the army itself, and especially on Klapka and myself, and might thus have excited the suspicion, that both of us had frustrated the execution of his plan of operations, which was unknown to us, by our intentionally bringing on battles unfavorable in their results—for instance, on the days of Kápolna and Eger-Farmos—and this to render it impossible for him to remain Hungarian commander-in-chief.

The discovery of facts confirmatory of this suspicion appeared, consequently, to be the chief aim of these examinations. Had this been attained, two birds would have been killed with one stone—"Dembinski" and "victory" would have ceased to be *contradictions*; and myself and my proclamation of Waizen would have *ended our struggles!*

The latter especially caused Kossuth much vexation. Chiefly to render harmless its and its author's influence had Dembinski been written for to Paris—were the independent army divisions invented. The ROYAL HUNGARIAN-CONSTITUTIONAL *corps d'armée of the upper Danube should disappear in the army of the POLISH-HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION*, that "Octavianus" Kossuth might be enabled at last, *unrestrained*, to enact with "Antonius" Bem and "Lepidus" Dembinski, "a triumvirate *en miniature*."

It is easily conceivable that the more Dembinski's unexpected failure again enveloped in mist the already bright prospect hereof,



the more earnestly must Kossuth have desired that "*the blame of this failure*" should be brought home to Klapka and me. Mészáros and Vetter accordingly examined with might and main—I forget now during how many days.

They did not find, however, what they sought.

"Dembinski" and "victory" constantly remained *contradictions*; myself and the proclamation of Waizen were *not* yet to end our struggles!

My punishment for disobedience to Dembinski was confined to a long-winded, humorous lecture, which Mészáros read me one day just after dinner, in Vetter's presence, after the examination of all the staff-officers was concluded.

"*In vino veritas*"—he began—"says a Latin proverb; I have therefore to-day intentionally taken some glasses of wine more than I needed, to enable me to tell you the truth frankly. Soon after you was appointed general and commander of the corps d'armée of the upper Danube, I must remark that you failed in that respect for the war-minister which I should have thought you owed him. Times innumerable you have slighted me by sending your proposals direct to the Committee of Defense. 'The old Mészáros is an old pigtail; why lose time?' you may have thought. I accommodated myself to it; for I am no friend to sycophancy. Then I heard one fine morning, you had suddenly proclaimed that old Mészáros was the sole authority you acknowledged in the country. You can conceive my righteous astonishment at this? you can conceive how difficult it was for me to comprehend the reason of this distinction of my insignificant self—expected least of all from you? you can conceive what trouble it cost me merely to identify myself rightly with my new dignity as the sole authority recognized by you in the state? At last I succeeded, however; and I now believed I could the more certainly reckon on your obedience, *the more* you had to make good in this respect for former times. But what a deception! You were pleased merely to jest, and have been no more obedient to me *since than before*; and just as little have you obeyed more recently the man whom I appointed your commander-in-chief. It seems, therefore, as if you had been chosen by Providence to give the lie to the proverb which says that 'He who would command, must first learn to obey.'"  
.....

This introduction was then followed by some rhapsodical re-

citals from the military regulations of the royal imperial Austrian army; and a kind "take it not amiss" sweetened at the end even the few bitternesses which during the harmless lecture had escaped from the kind-hearted old gentleman, probably against his will.

I thought I could not show my gratitude for so much gentle forbearance better than—while passing over in considerate silence an investigation into the alleged *inconsistencies in my conduct toward Mészáros*—by confining myself to the justification of my disobedience to Dembinski, which I did by some counter-citations from the same military regulations whence the war-minister had taken the really reprimanding part of his discourse.

Mészáros availed himself of my answer to resume the discourse, and informed me that Dembinski had already been removed from the chief command, and that Vetter would take it.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

Kossuth either had not the courage to oppose the judgment pronounced against Dembinski by the assembly of staff-officers, or he perceived that it was *just*; suffice it—Dembinski did not immediately obtain, so far as I know, any satisfaction whatever for the affront he had suffered. It was left to him to see how he should console or avenge himself.

Some days after the retreat of the army to Tiszafüred, Colonel John Damjanics—having crossed the Theiss at Czibakháza with his army division (one half of the third army corps)—appeared suddenly on the railway from Pesth to Szolnok, between the hostile brigades under Ottinger in Abany and Kargern in Szolnok, attacked the latter, and defeated it.

Dembinski now claimed the honor of this victory *exclusively to himself*; because, about a week or a fortnight before, he had sent to the third army corps, which stood on the left bank of the Theiss, opposite Szolnok and at Czibakháza, an order to attack the enemy in the beginning of March. Neither Damjanics nor his brave troops, nor the indolence of the hostile brigade under Ottinger in Abany, nor the comfortable feeling of security of that

under Kargern in Szolnok, which allowed itself to be literally surprised in the midst of a boundless plain in broad daylight—nothing of all this, according to Dembinski's view, had any merit in the victory—only *he* alone; while, *on the other hand*, it was *solely* owing to *me*—said Dembinski further—that this victory could not now exert any favorable influence on the operations of our chief army: for through my treason the battle of Kápolna had been lost; I had been the cause why the cantonment-stations Eger-Farmos, Lövö, Szent-István, and Négyes—in which he intended to await the victory of Szolnok, in order to advance again immediately toward the capitals—had to be evacuated by our army; nay, even the last possibility of suddenly resuming the offensive had been destroyed by *me alone*, in retreating from Poroszló across the Theiss, *contrary* to his express command.

Thus Dembinski consoled—thus avenged himself; and Count Guyon seconded him therein.

But the declarations which escaped from Dembinski at this occasion about his most secret war-operative thoughts, when combined with the events already communicated during the campaign, enable us to perceive, almost in its details, the plan of operations according to which Dembinski thought to reconquer the capitals.

During the second half of February Dembinski had at his disposal *ten* army divisions, the strength of each of which varied on an average from 4000 to 4500 men, baggage train included.

*Seven* of these army divisions he destined for attack along the high road of Gyöngyös.

*One* he left at Tiszafüred and Poroszló for the protection of the passage across the Theiss between these places.

*Two* army divisions (the third army corps) had to take Szolnok in the beginning of March, and then to make a demonstration on the railway-line against the capitals.

Dembinski's plan of operations was consequently this;

*Demonstration* along the railroad; *principal attack* along the high road of Gyöngyös.

A demonstration—to answer its object, namely, to make the enemy believe *that the demonstrating column is the principal column for attack*—must be undertaken with reference to such circumstances of time and place as do *not beforehand* prevent the enemy being deceived.



Bearing this rule in mind, Dembinski had quite correctly deferred the commencement of the demonstration on the railroad till the beginning of March ; for, having been opposed as late as the 21st of February, with the seventh army corps to Field-marshal Schlick at Sagó-Szent-Péter, and as this place was at least nine good marching stations distant from the point where the demonstration on the railroad was to be commenced—the enemy would have perceived immediately, from the attack on Szolnok, made, for instance, before the 3d of March, *that our MAIN FORCE was by no means to be sought for behind this column.*

We ought not, in justice, to suppose that Dembinski *intended* to bring his principal column of attack on the main road of Gy-öngyös into conflict with the enemy seven or eight days *before* the beginning of this demonstration along the railroad ; for this would have been sheer nonsense, and Dembinski's plans of operations were always based on a distinct, definite idea—only in their *execution* he *always* got into difficulties. Moreover we must remember that Dembinski had as early as the 26th of February repeatedly asserted *that he had by no means wished for the conflict on the Tarna.*

We may therefore be completely at rest on this point, namely, that Dembinski was *from the first* determined to await the beginning of the demonstration, nay even its consequences, favorable for our principal attack ; and his advance from Miskolcz as far as the Tarna must appear to us consequently *only* as an arrangement for the intended principal attack.

Dembinski undoubtedly intended to steal away *unobserved* with his seven army divisions to the Tarna, in order to remain there *hidden* until this demonstration should have been begun. For this reason it was, that, on the 24th of February, at Mezö-Kövesd, he complained so bitterly to me about Klapka's sudden attacks on Kompolt and Pétervására, and was quite right in maintaining that Klapka was disclosing to the enemy his (Dembinski's) intentions ; for these surprises plainly directed the enemy's attention to our principal column of attack.

It is true that Klapka might oppose to this, that the principal column of attack could not have reached the Tarna *unobserved*, unless Dembinski had had ready *at least* thirty thousand *invisible-caps*, so that each of our soldiers might have drawn one of them over his ears, and thus become invisible. This, however,

will not at all prevent Dembinski—as we already know him—from afterward maintaining that the execution of his plan of operations was wrecked entirely *in consequence of Klapka's surprises*; for its execution we must consider as wrecked *with the first discharge of cannon on the 26th of February*.

The two-days' battle of Kápolna, which this discharge of cannon opened, seems to have been given by the commander-in-chief only *par dépit*. As soon as it was lost, however, he had again ready a *new* definite plan of operations. We deduce this directly from *his own* declarations made in consequence of the victory at Szolnok. The lines of operation remained *the same* as those in the first plan, only Dembinski had this time to abandon the *deception by means of demonstration*, just because this deception was *no longer* possible after the battle of Kápolna. He consequently intended only to await the taking of Szolnok, and then immediately to resume the offensive on the main road of Gyöngyös. He calculated naturally *on this*, that the resolution with which the third army corps would advance on the railroad must oblige Field-marshal Windischgrätz either to weaken his main forces by detachments to the railway-line, or even completely retreat toward the capitals.

To *this* plan of operations also, and the combinations on which its execution depended, considered in itself, not much can be objected: only in the *preliminary arrangements for it*, Dembinski had again overlooked a *trifling matter*.

As is known, he intended to *conceal* his defeated and pursued seven army divisions for the time being in the oft-mentioned cantonments, and to let them rest until—as has been said—Szolnok should be taken. In order to be *quite sure* that these seven army divisions should *not be discovered* in their hiding-places, Dembinski—since we had no invisible-caps in our possession—by way of wise precaution, *immediately after the battle of Kápolna*, should—beginning with Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz, and ending with the last hostile private soldier—have SO PASTED UP *the eyes of each man, that the whole Austrian army had remained at least DURING EIGHT DAYS IN TOTAL BLINDNESS*. Dembinski having neglected to do this, had to see his *second* plan of operations also wrecked in the combat at Eger-Farmos, and retreated in despair behind the Theiss.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER Dembinski's dismissal in the camp at Tiszafüred, it was felt to be urgently necessary that the troops should immediately march. Tiszafüred, whose stores were exhausted, proved to be very unfavorably situated for the speedy importation of large supplies—especially at that time, when the inundation had just set in. The conjoint chief command, which—as we shall presently see—had succeeded to Dembinski, was destitute of the firmness requisite for energetically repressing disorders arising in the camp.

In place of the just-wrecked plan of operations Vetter and Dembinski projected a *new* one, namely :

*Demonstration* on the high road of Gyöngyös with the seventh army corps.

*Principal attack* on the railway-line with the first, second, and third corps.

This plan of operations was submitted to the *President* for his *approval*. Undoubtedly Kossuth had good manners enough to find it incomparable; nevertheless—he might perhaps have thought—it would at the same time be desirable to be at once quite certain that no accessory circumstance had been neglected therein, in itself insignificant, and yet perhaps important enough to be espied by envious eyes, and immediately sharply criticised. Görgei or Klapka—Kossuth might have thought further—will certainly discover directly any weak point in this plan of operations, and if we omit previously to ask their judgment upon it, though only *pro forma*, they will do all they can to damage it with the troops; nay principally *on account of the troops*, with which both these commanders of army corps seem unfortunately to be very popular, this precaution is indispensable. Finally, Kossuth might have offered to take upon himself personally to confer *with me* about the plan of operations, leaving to General Vetter to speak with Klapka on the subject.

Thus I explain to myself the occasion of a *tête-à-tête* between



me and Kossuth, during which he, after some hints about a certain amount of consideration which must still be shown toward Dembinski, suddenly began upon the plan of operations, expressly assuring me that Dembinski and Vetter had, indeed, projected it, but that he (Kossuth) nevertheless wished, before he had it put into execution, to hear *my* judgment upon it. I answered, that a plan of operations was soon made, and that, *as far as regarded theory*, there was just as little to object against *this* as against the one recently abandoned; the main point was the *execution*, the details of which depended upon the effect, not always to be foreseen, of the hostile counter-movements, as well as upon a great number of other casualties.

Hereupon I was dismissed, with the assurance of deeply-felt thanks, and so forth; but was shortly after again sent for by the President.

This time Kossuth—naturally again under four eyes—began in an especially confidential manner: that the definitive nomination of Vetter as commander-in-chief was *still undecided upon*, nay, all things considered, was *not even very probable*; that I had consequently *still further* to act as provisional commander-in-chief, and immediately to prepare for the execution of the new plan of operations.

Without hesitation I declared myself ready—taking Kossuth's hints about the still undecided definitive promotion of Vetter, in the first instance for nothing else than the natural consequence of a rising scruple on the part of the latter in the meanwhile—and hastened to consult with Klapka and the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps about the dispositions to be first made for the troops, according to the new plan of operations.

Soon after I had left Kossuth, Vetter came in quest of me, and likewise charged me with the *same* commission as I had already received from the former; but he—in contradiction to Kossuth—assigned as the sole and exclusive reason for it, the circumstance that the *personnel* of his war-office had been left behind in Debreczin, and that he was therefore not able immediately to take the chief command in due form. He alleged this with such ingenuousness as in him—a man who seemed to be void of every kind of dissimulation—must be considered a proof that he had no presentiment of *the doubtfulness of his promotion*, which Kos-

suth had expressly specified as *the reason of my further acting as provisional commander-in-chief of the army.*

I sought *in vain* for a valid reason for this ambiguous behavior on the part of the President. The sole supposition which occurred to me was, that Kossuth wished thereby merely to allay my presumed discontent at Vetter's appointment to the chief command, already definitively indicated, that I might not, so long as the army remained in Tiszafüred, and consequently in close contact with me, perchance entertain the idea of instigating the troops against Vetter. This supposition, however, seemed to me not sufficiently tenable. It would have been so perhaps, if, *with Vetter's previous knowledge*, Kossuth had given these hints about the improbability of his promotion. That the President, however, had dared to give these intimations *behind Vetter's back*, and had thereby seriously compromised him—who conducted himself toward me already as actual commander-in-chief of the army—but had at the same time exposed himself to the danger of being compromised by me with Vetter ;—all this found in *that* supposition *no foundation whatever.*

Only *later* experience led me subsequently to suppose, that Kossuth, probably while in Tiszafüred, had felt that "*longing for the staff of command,*" which afterward tormented him so often ; that he therefore had taken advantage of Dembinski's removal to introduce a kind of interregnum in the chief command of the army, during which he could satisfy this "longing" at least for a time ; and that his ambiguous behavior toward Vetter and myself, as well as *the whole comedy with the plan of operations*, had its origin only in his intention *to prolong the interregnum as much as possible*, whereby Kossuth might not have failed to make way for his direct influence with the army in future.

My proceedings during the interregnum were confined to signing the order of march for the first and second corps—which were sent from Tiszafüred down toward Czibakháza—and to reducing the *four* army divisions to *three*, this having been ordered long ago, as has been mentioned, by the war-minister, and the possibility of executing the order having at last presented itself in Tiszafüred.

Kossuth in the mean time had received critical news from Komorn. The commander of the fortress, General Török—it was said—was *not equal* to the post which he held ; he was

altogether deficient in firmness ; a more energetic man must speedily be put in his place, if we would not run the risk of losing the fortress.

The President now consulted with me about the choice of a new commander of the fortress. I proposed Colonel Guyon for this post, as what was wanting here was *merely* an *energetic* man, and as the military council of the fortress consisted of men who were able to supply Colonel Guyon's deficiency in the knowledge necessary to every commander of a fortress.

Kossuth adopted this suggestion ; nevertheless, to be quite secure, he thought it necessary to appoint *another* commander besides Guyon for the fortress of Komorn. His choice fell on the then Colonel Lenkey. Both had now to look out, *how* they should get into the fortress : he who first succeeded in doing so, was to remove Török from his post, and take the command of the fortress upon himself.

The President previously made both of them generals, and at the same time also Colonels Damjanics, Klapka, and Aulich.

Count Guyon consequently left the seventh army corps ; his division was broken up, and its troops incorporated into the other three divisions ; while the command of the division of the right wing, which had become vacant by Aulich's nomination to general and commander of the second army corps, was given to the senior colonel of the latter.

The enemy having forced back our out-posts from Poroszló, and having burnt—after an attempt at a hasty reconnoitering toward the wretchedly constructed *tête-de-pont* of the Theiss—the Poroszló bridge over the brook Cserö ; and the crossing of the river being impracticable on any other point between Tisza-füred and Tokaj, partly on account of the inundation, partly of the present want of materials for a bridge—the seventh army corps had now, with this changed aspect, to march up the river as far as Rakamaz, opposite Tokaj, in order here to gain at last the right bank of the Theiss.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN the preceding chapter I gave expression to the conjecture, that Kossuth in Tiszafüred had striven primarily only for the establishment of his direct influence with the army. Apart from the evident pains he took to leave the post of commander-in-chief unoccupied as long as possible, whereby—easily circumventing the indolent war-minister—he brought himself into immediate contact with the several commanders of the troops—I find this conjecture confirmed especially by his successful attempts to secure to himself for the future also this *quasi*-good-naturedly-patriarchal official relation between him and myself.

How these attempts could be successful with me will become evident from what follows :

I had not seen Kossuth from the beginning of November 1848 till the early part of March 1849, and had kept up no direct intercourse whatever with him since his flight from Pesth to Debreczin. The correspondence between us, active as it had been during my sojourn in Presburg, was entirely interrupted some time before the evacuation of the capitals. Kossuth had in fact tried, while I was with the then corps d'armée of the upper Danube in the mountain-towns, to renew our correspondence; but without success, for I did not answer his letters. This I believed I owed to those officers of the corps d'armée, who continued to take part in the defense of the country *only in consequence of my proclamation of Waizen*.

Being obliged, however, only too soon to discover that Mészáros was, on the one hand, unfortunately altogether unworthy of the confidence which the officers had placed in the firmness of his political opinions, and, on the other, was in general calculated rather to bring the regular defense of the country by degrees completely into decay than to promote it;—it seemed to me much more advantageous for the security of the political basis on which I wished to maintain the war against Austria, as well as for the continuance of the contest itself, that I should no longer

throw any obstacles in the way of a direct understanding between Kossuth and myself.

For this reason I had put the steps which became necessary for removing Dembinski from the chief command directly under the ægis of the government, by causing Szemere to take part in the assembly of staff-officers; for this reason also, on the arrival of Kossuth in Tiszafüred, I determined to press on him as much as possible a thorough consideration of the dangers which would ensue to Hungary from the intermixture of revolutionary tendencies with the legal cause of our combat in self-defense. I thought I should obtain this object most surely by surprising, as it were, Kossuth with the following question: *whether he did not think that Hungary might be STILL quite satisfied with the constitution of 1848, IF THE PORTFOLIOS OF WAR AND FINANCE WERE AGAIN TRANSFERRED TO THE MINISTRY OF VIENNA.* Kossuth's answer was an evasive one; he thought only, he said, *that the liberty of HUNGARY would be CONSTANTLY in danger, SO LONG AS POLAND ALSO WAS NOT FREE, and that with the freedom of HUNGARY the freedom of EUROPE likewise would certainly be lost.*

The most natural question on my part would now have been, what Kossuth meant by the freedom of Hungary, Poland, and Europe; but he prevented me from any further scrutiny of his political creed by the declaration, which under existing circumstances was a very important one, *that he held it to be the MOST SACRED duty of all who meant HONORABLY by the country, to agitate NO QUESTION, and to venture on NO STEP, THE INVESTIGATION OR CONSEQUENCES OF WHICH might divide the nation into parties, and so only INCREASE THE POWER OF THE COMMON ENEMY OF ALL.*

There was a severe reproof *for me* in this declaration; for it was I who had already, by the proclamation of Waizen, agitated *such a question* and ventured on *such a step*. But the more keenly I felt the censure contained in the declaration just *made by Kossuth*, the more strongly did I believe it contained a guarantee *that he would himself undertake* NOTHING BY WHICH THE POWER OF THE COMMON ENEMY OF US ALL SHOULD BE INCREASED.

On the strength of this belief I completely gave up *all further opposition to Kossuth*, and endeavored to combat—unfortunately in vain—merely from the point of *Hungarian national* HONOR,

even his *Poland mania*, with which, *from* POLITICAL aversion, I could by no means connect myself. *This belief strengthened anew my confidence in Kossuth*; while his conduct, *simulating reciprocal confidence*, rendered me completely inaccessible to any suspicion against him.

After these premises it was no longer difficult for Kossuth to regulate the relation between us *quite as he thought proper*; not difficult for him to persuade me that in Debreczin there existed a party which was striving to call forth a decision of the Diet, in accordance with which the nation would have to surrender to Prince Windischgrätz *at discretion*; that he could hardly any longer oppose with sufficient energy the agitations for *this purpose*, as he could not absent himself even for one day, without having to fear that a motion made with *this intent* might obtain the majority of the Lower-chamber; that he could venture on this journey to Tiszafüred only because the representatives had pledged to him their *word of honor that they would come to no conclusion whatever during his absence, which had been limited to a certain number of days*, and that he had to be back at Debreczin without fail before the expiration of the fixed term, in order to preserve the nation from the most disgraceful of all fates, from *self-degradation*, SELF-ABANDONMENT; that there was but *one thing* which could save him for some time, and with him the whole country, from this painful situation, and this one thing was—*a victory!*—even if not a decisive one, at least one *upon which a retreat of our troops did not again immediately follow*; for that in Debreczin the watchword ran, it is true, literally, "*Victory or death!*" but in reality signified, "*A victory! or we DIE FROM ANGUISH.*"

Taking all this for *genuine truth*, how could I suspect in the members of *THIS party* (later the peace-party) the ADVOCATES OF MY POLITICAL CREED?

After I had already received, as has been mentioned, a lecture from the war-minister for my disobedience to Dembinski, Kossuth asked me: if I had been in Dembinski's place, what I would have done with Görgei? "I would have had him shot," I replied; "*for if I had been in Dembinski's place, I would not have issued orders à la DEMBINSKI, consequently would have given no occasion whatever for a SIMILAR DISOBEDIENCE.*"

Of this answer Kossuth reported to the Diet *only the first*



*clause*: the second clause, containing my reason, *he passed over in silence*; and thus represented me as the *poor repentant sinner pardoned* BY HIM.

The members of the later peace-party taking this also for *genuine truth*, how could they suspect in ME, the *poor sinner pardoned* BY KOSSUTH, an ADVOCATE OF THEIR POLITICAL CREED?

Kossuth *by lying* had interposed a thick vail *between* his political opponents, and thus retained free scope for the prosecution of his own "PERSONAL" *policy*.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

KOSSUTH, MÉSZÁROS, and VETTER had left TISZAFÜRED again, and had returned to DEBRECZIN; the first and second army corps were on their route to SZOLNOK; the seventh corps had now to cross the THEISS at TISZAFÜRED, in order to begin the demonstration on the main road of GYÖNGYÖS; and as yet nobody knew who commanded the army!

The troops might suppose it was *myself*; while I was convinced of the contrary, but without knowing any thing more precisely about the future nomination of the commander-in-chief, than that, as has been already mentioned, on the one hand, Kossuth had contradicted the probability of Vetter's being appointed to this post; on the other, only that Vetter had *acted as if he were already invested with the office*. Neither the latter circumstance nor DEMBINSKI'S removal were officially known; MÉSZÁROS had sunk within these few days in TISZAFÜRED completely to naught; Kossuth was still irresolute; and thus the army strolled, in a good-natured spontaneity as it were, toward an uncertain destination.

So long as the impossibility of passing the THEISS with the seventh army corps at TISZAFÜRED, or between this point and TOKAJ, had not been proved by attempts, I had, as commander of this corps—which moreover, according to the new plan of operations, had to operate *independently*—no particular reason to trouble myself much whether Peter or Paul should become

commander-in-chief. But when the inevitable necessity suddenly forced itself on me, of gaining the right bank of the Theiss by means of the considerable circuit by Tokaj, then I had to fear that the delay—impossible to be foreseen at Kossuth and Vetter's departure from Tiszafüred resulting therefrom to the demonstration on the main road of Gyöngyös, might essentially embarrass the future commander-in-chief of the army in the immediate execution of the new plan of operations. I hastened therefore to Debreczin, to learn *to whom* the command of the army had at last really been confided, and in order immediately by word of mouth to inform the new commander of this delay in the demonstration, and to urge him at once to decide that the previous plan of operations should remain in full force in spite of this delay, or if not—*what* task was next to be assigned to the seventh army corps.

On my arrival at Debreczin, I found Kossuth just on the point of writing to me. He could now orally discuss with me the subject of his intended written communication. At first he asked me what qualifications I required in the future commander-in-chief of the army.

"*That he be a SOLDIER and a HUNGARIAN* ; in other respects, whether older or younger in rank than myself is to me indifferent," was my answer.

Hereupon Kossuth informed me without any further circumlocution, that he had already signed Vetter's nomination as commander-in-chief. At the same time he asked me my judgment of him. I replied, that I could not yet give any opinion on Vetter, having been only twice in contact with him, and then but very transiently ; that those, however, who professed to know him, represented him as an experienced, brave soldier.

Now it was not *this* which Kossuth wished to know about Vetter, but whether I did not think him capable of treason to the country.

In answer to this question I assured the President that Vetter had made on me the impression that he was a *man of honor*.

I intended now to take my leave, in order to find the new commander-in-chief, transact with him my business relating to the service, and then very speedily rejoin my corps. Kossuth, however, asked me to stay a little longer, as the first distribution of the recently created order of military merit was about to take

place at his residence, and he should be pleased if I would assist in person on the occasion.

Soon afterward the then civil and military coryphei of Hungary who were present at Debreczin assembled at Kossuth's.

Kossuth opened the ceremony by a short speech appropriate to the occasion; then called over the names of those who had been found worthy of having first conferred on them the order of the second class of military merit (there were three classes); and in conclusion decorated such of the persons named as happened to be present.

The ceremony was over, Vetter was present, and my time was short; I therefore availed myself of the occasion to state to him the reason for my being there; and after I had received his answer, that in spite of the delay in crossing the Theiss, the task of the seventh army corps in the operations for the next campaign remained *the one already mentioned*, I again left Debreczin—a few hours after my arrival there—and hastened back to my head-quarters at Egyek.

Among those who were decorated with the order of the second class of military merit were also Perczel and myself; nay—if I am not mistaken—even General Count Vécsei, whose merits in the field at that time, so far as I know, never sufficed to raise the standard of value above the freezing-point. General Klapka, on the contrary, was passed over, “*out of consideration*” for Mészáros—as was said.

In order to understand *how an injustice toward Klapka* could be demanded out of “*consideration*” for Mészáros, we must remember that Mészáros, after he had been repeatedly unmercifully beaten by Field-marshal Schlick, had transferred the command of his utterly demoralized corps to Klapka, and that he, a few weeks later, *with the same troops*, had successfully engaged *the same enemy* in several hot battles.

This “*consideration*” for Mészáros, *at Klapka's expense*, becomes perfectly *explicable*, if we consider that Mészáros himself, as war-minister, *could NOT play a passive part in the scrutiny of those who were to be decorated*. Nay, we are obliged to recognize such “*consideration*” positively as a *postulate* of the most tender *duty toward one's self*, when—as in the present instance—ONE AND THE SAME human skin incloses *him who is both the object and the agent in the “consideration.”*



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE *tête-de-pont* between Tiszafüred and Poroszló had already received an adequate number of troops from the second army corps. Directly after my return from Debreczin, the whole seventh army corps consequently was marched from Egyek and Csege by Tiszapolgár, Szent-Mihály, Tiszalök, and Nagy-Falu to Rakamaz.

In the stead of the bridge on piles over the Theiss, uselessly destroyed by fire in the month of January out of excessive fear of an offensive against Debreczin on the part of Field-marshal Schlick, the passage over the Theiss between Rakamaz and Tokaj had been re-established by means of a floating bridge. Over the river Hernád at Gesztely was thrown a similar bridge, time enough to enable the seventh army corps, after its passage over the Theiss, to advance without impediment from Tokaj by Miskolcz to the main road of Gyöngyös, and pursuing it further, with the division of the right wing as far as Szikszó, with those of the centre and of the left wing as far as Szihalom and Mező-Kövesd.

In Tokaj the army corps had suffered a diminution of eight squadrons of hussars, which, according to the order of the commander-in-chief, had to be sent to Czibakháza for the reinforcement of the main body of the army.

In Miskolcz the army corps sustained another loss of from 300 to 400 infantry, one platoon of hussars, and two guns. Of these troops an independent column was formed and detached into the northern comitates against the Slavonian militia, which the hostile brigades under Götz and Jablonowski had left there, when they marched, after Dembinski had retreated behind the Theiss, from Kaschau by Miskolcz into the district of the operations of their chief army.

It was also in Miskolcz that I saw for the first time the *octroyed* constitution of the 4th of March with its boundless proviso; that *OBTRUDED gigantic bond*, with the clause, "*I will pay* WHEN IT PLEASES ME!"

In Mező-Kövesd we received information from a scout that the nearest hostile corps was stationed at Heves, while on the main road before us, even as far as Gyöngyös, no enemy had been seen.

The demonstration had consequently to begin with the march to Heves; and the army corps at the height of Szikszó was directed from the main road in two columns toward the south, one of which advanced by Erdötelek, the other by Besenyő. An over-hasty patrol of hussars betrayed to the enemy our approach too soon. He drew back—so said the report—toward Jász-Ápáti.

We thought we had now once more to continue our demonstration against the capitals parallel with the main road, to induce Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz—whose attention must have been already directed to us in consequence of the reports of the column which had retreated from Heves—to detach larger forces against us, and thus facilitate in a direct manner the advance of our main army on the railway-line against the capitals. Vetter had, however, meanwhile crossed the Theiss at Czibakháza only to retreat again immediately behind it, and again to project a new plan of operations, the execution of which had to begin with marching back from Czibakháza to Tiszafüred and passing the Theiss between this place and Poroszló. The seventh army corps was ordered, from its position at Besenyő and Erdötelek, to protect this passage.

This was the end of the demonstration of the seventh army corps against the capitals, as well as of the whole second offensive, which had scarcely begun.

About the same time I charged the small expeditionary corps, which had been detached from Miskolcz into the northern comitates against the Slavonian militia, to direct its inroads mainly toward Komorn. Thereby, on the one hand, an end would be put to the patrolling about of hostile detachments in the valley of the Eipel (Ipoly); on the other, the enemy would be induced, by the bold marches of this insignificant expeditionary column, to suppose the approach of a stronger corps, as well as the intention *to relieve Komorn by its means*.

After two-thirds of the main army had debouched at Poroszló, the seventh army corps as vanguard lined the Tarna from Fel-Döbrő as far as Bod, and awaited in this position the approach of the main body.

Meanwhile divers rumors were heard about the details of the passage across the Theiss at Czibakháza, and the retreat behind the river immediately subsequent thereupon ; and these rumors, taken together, attributed to Field-marshal L. Vetter, if possible, still less ability for the post of commander-in-chief than Dembinski had shown. I could not therefore but apprehend that I should see the just-impending offensive founder once more in consequence of incapacity in the command. This thought left me no peace.

While my army corps was stationed on the Tarna, and had every prospect of remaining inactive during some days, I started, about the end of March, from Kerecsend for Tiszafüred, where Kossuth, Vetter, Damjanics, Klapka, and Aulich were then staying. I hoped to succeed so far as that the new plan of operations, in case it was already adopted, as well as the nearest preparations for its execution, might previously be brought before a military council to be deliberated upon.

Of the persons just named, Generals Damjanics and Klapka were the first whom I met in Tiszafüred. Before them I gave vent in some severe remarks to my vexation at the purposeless moving to and fro of the army with which Field-marshal L. Vetter had entered on his new charge ; and was not a little surprised when Damjanics interrupted me, in order to accuse *himself*, in Vetter's stead, of deserving the blame of the recent sudden abandonment of the plan of operations ; for he it was who—*contrary to his former custom*—intimidated by the news that the enemy, 60,000 strong, stood opposite them, had proposed the immediate return of the troops, when they had scarcely effected their passage over the Theiss.

I had never before either seen or spoken to Damjanics. The manly frankness which he showed by accusing himself in Vetter's stead—although averse to him in his inmost soul—won for him at once my esteem and confidence ; while, on the other hand, the certainty that Field-marshal L. Vetter had no part in the blame of the miscarriage of the late offensive deprived me of every reason for doubting the capability of the commander-in-chief for his post.

I naturally desisted now, without further hesitation, from my original design of having the project for the nearest operations submitted to the judgment of a military council, and confined



myself to informing the President Kossuth, and the commander-in-chief of the army Vetter, that I had come, as presumptive leader of the vanguard, merely for the purpose of receiving oral information—consequently more circumstantial—relative to my special mission during the next advance.

Vetter informed me that he intended for the present to confine himself to a single compact advance along the main road as far as Gyöngyös, and to arrange the movements to be executed further on than Gyöngyös according to those of the enemy, but at all events to maintain the offensive until something decisive should happen.

Thus, in the end of March, 1849, the Hungarian chief army—according to the documents, the baggage-train included, not quite 42,000 men strong, with about 160 pieces of artillery, two being twelve-pound batteries of six guns each—was concentrated in the near environs of the battle-field of Kápolna, in order for once to act at last in earnest.

On the 31st of March we had already reached with the main body Gyöngyös, with the advanced troops (the seventh army corps) Hort, without drawing a blade.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

DURING our advance to Gyöngyös and Hort, Field-marshal L. Vetter suddenly fell ill; and the Hungarian army was again without a leader, facing the enemy, who was ready for fighting.

According to rank, it seemed to be due to *me* as a matter of course to act as Vetter's representative in the chief command. I felt, however, an inward repugnance to demanding that *here rank alone* should decide, while I *myself* adopted the principle of allowing the mere rank to exercise an influence in the choice of my sub-commanders *only* between candidates of almost *equal aptitude*.

I therefore insisted only on the speedy filling up of the vacant chief command; while Damjanics and Klapka expressly demanded that it should be transferred to *me*, as the senior in rank

of the commanders of corps. Kossuth was consequently obliged to appoint me at least as Vetter's provisional substitute. He had thereby probably to overcome two concentrically-opposed sentiments, namely, *his childish fear of my presumptive rivalry*, and *his own longing for the staff of the chief command*; because *only thus* can it be explained how—in spite of the *pressing* necessity for a leader being given to the army which was advancing on the offensive—*several days* could elapse from the arrival of the medical report stating Vetter's physical inability to take a personal share in the campaign, until my nomination as commander-in-chief *ad interim*.

I believe I make no mistake in asserting that it was on the evening of the 30th of March 1849, that Kossuth's order for me to appear in Erlau without delay reached me in Gyöngyös. I arrived at Erlau during the same night, received there on the morning of the 31st of March from Kossuth the charge to take the command of the army meanwhile, *until Vetter should recover*, and returned in the evening to Gyöngyös.

In the mean time we were informed by scouts that the enemy was about to concentrate his main forces at Gödöllő, and had established intrenchments on the points of passage across the little river Galga, as well as at the convent of Besenyő. Thus it seemed as if Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz intended to maintain the defensive, and await our principal attack on the main road from Gyöngyös to Pesth.

*This* line of attack being intersected by the two little rivers Zagyva and Galga, the marshy banks of which *of themselves* rendered the advance of an army uncommonly difficult, Klapka proposed to attack on the Gyöngyös main road only with the seventh army corps; while with the first, second, and third corps, from Gyöngyös by Arokszállás and Jász-Berény, to turn the defensive position of the enemy on the Galga in its right flank.

All attacks combined with far turnings expose, it is well known, one of the two parts of the army on the offensive, which are isolated from each other during the manœuvre of turning, to the danger of being attacked and beaten by a hostile superior force, whereupon the other part commonly shares the same fate.

The extent of this danger bears an exact relation to the extent of the circuit which the turning-column makes.

In the above-mentioned project of Klapka, for instance, the

seventh army corps had by itself to be exposed during at least four or five days to the overpowering attack of the hostile main army presumed to be on the Galga; a space of time during which Prince Windischgrätz and his counselors must necessarily have been *asleep* to be *too late* in remarking the movement of our principal column of attack.

But when I nevertheless voted *for* the execution of Klapka's project, I did so only because I had already repeatedly experienced—as, indeed, only a short while ago under Dembinski—that if *opposed to Prince Windischgrätz*, many a strategic sin might be committed altogether with impunity.

My appointment to Vetter's post obliged me to remit the command of the seventh army corps to the oldest commander of division in the corps, for whom again was substituted in his command the oldest staff-officer of the division.

Vetter having retained his staff in Tiszafüred, I also transferred to the chief of the general staff of the seventh army corps the management of the details of the collective operations of the army, and put in his place in the seventh army corps a staff-officer of hussars fortunately competent for the office.

It was understood as a matter of course that all these changes were to be considered only as temporary, so long as Vetter's return still remained in prospect.

Klapka's project of turning the enemy had received, besides my assent, also that of the provisional chief of the general staff of the whole army, and the beginning of the turning was fixed for the 2d of April. On the same day the seventh army corps was to commence, by its advance as far as Hatvan on the Zagyva, its attacks on the position of the enemy on the main road from Gyöngyös to Pesth. The results of a reconnoitering, undertaken the day before (1st of April), from Hort toward this point, gave us reason to suppose that the enemy (the Schlick corps) would make a vigorous resistance.

Field-marshal Schlick did more than that. He even took up the offensive (on the 2d of April) simultaneously with our seventh army corps. The encounter between it and the Schlick corps took place half way from Hort to Hatvan.

The royal Hungarian seventh army corps conquered.

Hatvan and the line of the Zagyva from Szent-Jakab as far as Fénsszaru were the immediate fruit of this victory, equally im-



portant to us in a strategic as in a tactic point of view: in a *strategic*, because the possession of the line of the Zagyva essentially facilitated the masking of the manœuvre of our principal column of attack; in a *tactic*, because the seventh army corps, about 15,000 strong, in the position of Hatvan could resist any repeated hostile attack that could be attempted far more successfully with half its strength, than in that at Hort with its whole.

I had purposely remained in my head-quarters at Gyöngyös during the battle at Hatvan, consequently far from the field, that I might not embarrass during the action my substitute in the seventh army corps on his *début* as independent commander. So that the favorable issue of this battle brought us, besides the material advantage, also the moral one of the satisfactory conviction that to the new commander of the seventh army corps could confidently be intrusted the accomplishment of the highly important mission which fell to the share of this corps during the turning-manœuvre of the principal column of attack; and the already commenced turning was continued with so much the more confidence.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE first, second, and third army corps\*—about 27,000 men in all—were stationed during the battle of Hatvan, on the 2d of April, at Arokszállás; in the evening of the 3d of April they reached Jász-Berény; Kossuth and I arrived simultaneously with them at the latter place, both having left Gyöngyös that morning.

General Klapka had meanwhile been informed that the corps of Ban Jellachich had been seen in the course of the day marching from Alberti toward Pilis along the railway line.

According to our plan of march we had to reach on the 4th

\* The strength of these three army corps was at that time very unequal; the first (Klapka) amounted to from 11,000 to 12,000 men; the second (Aulich) reached about 9,000; the third (Damjanics) fluctuated between 6,000 and 7,000; the baggage-train included.

of April, with the first corps Tápió-Bicske, with the third Nagy-Káta, with the second Tápió-Szele.

In consequence of the news about the proximity of the Croats, Klapka left at daybreak, on the 4th of April, the camp at Jász-Berény, in order to advance over Tápió-Bicske on the direct route toward Pesth, so as aggressively to cross the supposed movement of the Ban against Gödöllő, and thereby frustrate, if possible, his junction with Prince Windischgrätz. General Damjanics, with the third corps, followed close behind Klapka as far as Nagy-Káta. General Aulich moved with the second, as arranged, to Tápió-Szele.

The victory of our seventh army corps at Hatvan, which, as is known, had been gained without my personal co-operation, had determined me to adopt the plan of leaving in future the hands of all the commanders of corps *completely free* in the execution of the task assigned them, and to interfere only at critical times: for if my personal influence as commander-in-chief had a decidedly favorable effect, it ought to be reserved for moments of the most imminent danger; if it had not, then I undoubtedly did better the seldomer I made it felt.

Thus Klapka also was not to be embarrassed in the least by my presence during his offensive against the Ban. Not till late in the morning of the 4th of April did I leave Jász-Berény, in order to remove my head-quarters to Nagy-Káta, after having advised Kossuth—being concerned for his personal safety—rather to await the results of the day in the former place.

I was with my suite perhaps half-way to Nagy-Káta, when we saw thick clouds of smoke ascending from behind it, appearing to indicate an artillery action; but hearing no thundering of cannon, although the distance was apparently short, we took these clouds of smoke to be merely the consequence of an accidental fire-brand, and troubled ourselves no more about it. This delusion, however, did not last long. In the next quarter of an hour I received a report, that Klapka had encountered the enemy near Tápió-Bicske, and was already retreating.

We now hastened our ride, and soon found this Job's-post unfortunately more than sufficiently confirmed; for already in Nagy-Káta we met the first army corps fleeing *en débâdée* from Tápió-Bicske back thither.

I inquired first of all for General Klapka, its commander; but

he being no where to be found, I next attempted to stop and arrange again the frightened and dispersed battalions. My suite assisted me therein with great devotedness. From useless exhortations it came to flat, and at last to sharp strokes; however, the hostile projectiles had constantly far more effect than our blades. I had soon sufficiently convinced myself of it; and now sent to General Damjanics, who was with his corps in the camp behind Nagy-Káta, an order by the most severe measures to put a stop to the flight of the first corps, to arrange it, and send it again in advance. At the same time I ordered my suite to assist General Damjanics therein, while I continued my original route toward Tápió-Bicske, in order to make myself in the mean while acquainted with the position and strength of the enemy.

The last swarms of the first army corps had not quite passed me, when an officer, whom I remembered to have seen once in Klapka's suite, galloped on from the direction of the abandoned field of battle. With the intention of learning from him something more particular respecting the fate of his chief, I barred his way.

"Save yourself . . . . Klapka has fallen . . . . a battery is lost . . . . all away . . . . the enemy already here . . . . !!!" cried he, while still far from me, and anticipating my questions. One might have taken this ill-omened man, from his laconic reports, for a Spartan, had he not been at the same time so anxiously endeavoring, first on the right, and then on the left, to get past me. I held the edge of my sabre across his nose, that he might at last stop his horse and give me an answer. But now it was evident, that this pseudo-Spartan knew nothing certain either about Klapka or the army, least of all about the enemy; and I let him immediately continue his course.

In the next moment, quitting the southwestern extremity of Nagy-Káta, I stood upon the field of battle abandoned by the fugitive first corps; at gun-range before me the little river Tápió, which can not be forded on account of its marshy banks; on the other side of it, at the distance of about half a (German) mile, Tápió-Bicske; between it and the river the ground hilly and sandy, near the river more level; the only bridge across the river Tápió, and at the same time the single direct communication between these places, already crossed by a part of the



enemy's infantry, under the protection of the hostile artillery planted along the opposite bank of the river; the openly displayed forces of the enemy small in proportion to those of the defeated first army corps; the regaining of the bridge by all means our next task; this was the sum of what I was able to perceive at a first glance.

General Damjanics had taken up a position before the southwestern extremity of Nagy-Káta, which faced the field of battle, with half of his forces, the Visocki division, at the very commencement of Klapka's retreat, in order to receive him. These troops stood consequently already prepared for action, while those of Klapka were still fleeing. The numerical strength of the Visocki division certainly did not amount to a third part of the first army corps, but it comprised the third and ninth Honvéd battalions, besides a battalion of the Schwarzenberg regiment under the command of the high-spirited Count Charles Leiningen-Westerburg, and defeated forthwith the same enemy who had just discomfited Klapka's whole corps.

While a battery, planted along the river below the bridge, vigorously attacked the position of the hostile artillery, the third and ninth Honvéd battalions advanced concentrically against the bridge itself. The *tirailleurs* at the first onset drove back to the opposite bank the swarm of the enemy's sharp-shooters, who had already advanced to this side of the river. The serried sections of both battalions, full of emulation, prepared to storm the bridge; but instead of at once impetuously advancing over it, out of rivalry they ran foul of each other when close to it. The honor of first storming was vigorously contended for by the ninth and third battalions in turn. The commander of the third battalion fortunately put a speedy end to the dispute by a heroic impromptu action. With swift resolve he seized the banner of the ninth battalion, rode with it over the bridge amid the hostile grape-shot, and next moment the two battalions, exasperated against each other, stormed in unison, the third battalion following its brave commander, the ninth its banner.

The enemy quitted the position along the river, and retreated behind the nearest sand-hills. Here he offered indeed once more an energetic resistance; but it lasted no longer than the passage of the Visocki division over the bridge. As soon as this was effected, the enemy repulsed anew began his retreat, and having

evacuated even Tápió-Bicske, posted himself for the last time on the heights to the southwest of this place; he did not, however, again await our attack, but preferred a hasty retreat toward Kóka to any further conflict.

When we arrived at the place of his last position, he had already got beyond the fire of our guns; he could only be reached by our cavalry. It was consequently my intention to have him pursued by them.

General Damjanics meanwhile—after he had succeeded in stopping and re-forming the Klapka corps, and had dispatched it together with the remaining half of his own corps from Nagy-Káta toward Tápió-Bicske—hastening in advance of these troops with the rest of his cavalry, had arrived at the Visocki division. From him I requested that a troop might be detached in pursuit of the enemy. He appointed for this purpose the whole of his cavalry, the Hanover and Ferdinand hussar regiments, under the command of the then Colonel (afterward General) Joseph von Nagy-Sándor.

Nagy-Sándor led the hussars brilliantly forward: it appeared to us as if the *queue* of the hostile column began to disband itself. Nagy-Sándor commenced the pursuit with some well-executed changes of direction, sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right: the fleeing enemy gained ever more ground. Nagy-Sándor made hereupon a decided turn to the left against the peaceful village of Pand, situated far from the line of the enemy's retreat, blockaded it, took it afterward by storm; and finally returned from the pursuit with a few private servants as captives, and as booty the baggage of their masters. The fleeing enemy must have felt deeply indebted to him.

The first army corps and the rest of the third had meanwhile also arrived on the southwestern heights of Tápió-Bicske. I ordered them to bivouac there; and rode back to the village, for the purpose of speaking with General Klapka, who, as I just learnt, had been seen there. To my great satisfaction, I found that no mischance had happened to his person. Less satisfactory were his communications about the circumstances which had brought on the defeat of the first corps.

When just about entering Tápió-Bicske, it was surprised on the outskirts of this place by the fire of hostile infantry. The head of the column was dispersed like chaff before the wind,

and the enemy, speedily developing his forces, immediately assumed the offensive.

Klapka, in order to gain time for deploying his long marching-column, ordered a part of his cavalry to charge the enemy. But the first regiment of hussars (Emperor), which he had appointed to make the attack, unfortunately belonged to the most uncertain troops in our army. Its staff-officers attacked, but their divisions turned back, threw themselves on Klapka's columns which were deploying, and spread terror and confusion among them. One single battery stood firm, while all the other parts of the corps, now seeking safety in flight, hastened back to the bridge over the Tápió. The enemy captured the abandoned battery, and could now direct the destructive fire of his guns, henceforth unobstructed, upon the masses, which, unable to resist, were already close to the entrance of the Tápió bridge, and thronged together in a densely entangled clew. Absolute despondency reigned in their ranks. Some sought refuge against the hostile balls in the marshes of the Tápió—escape from the roaring of the death that threatened, in the dismal silence of the extinction that awaited them.

All efforts on the part of Klapka to re-organize his troops for fight were in vain. He had at last to think of his own safety. He descended along the river toward Tápió-Szele, and was fortunate enough to discover in this direction a second passage across the Tápió; on account of the great circuit he had to make, however, he did not reach Nagy-Káta till the Visocki division had already advanced to the attack.

However, the speedy and successful prosecution of this offensive tranquilized him at least as to the further fate of his own corps; and utterly exhausted, he now sought first of all the rest so urgently necessary to recruit him.

Those about him had probably kept that circumstance secret out of consideration for him; and this naturally explained the divers rumors afloat respecting his fate; one representing him as wounded and a prisoner, another as having fallen on the field of battle, a third as suffocated in the marshes of the Tápió; which altogether, considering the events of the day, appeared certainly more credible than the real cause of his long absence from the first army corps.

Klapka's loss on that day was therefore important in a mate-



rial no less than in a moral point of view ; for besides a considerable number of men able to bear arms and a whole battery,\* he lost also a good part of our confidence in his wise foresight *before*, as well as in his steady perseverance *during* danger.

Both losses were naturally felt equally by all of us, but the moral perhaps more sensibly by us than by him. We got over the material loss, however, and consoled ourselves for the moral one with the hope that Klapka, by the defeat of his whole corps, as well as by the victory gained directly afterward by one half of the third corps, would be rendered more circumspect, and at the same time incited to endeavor to be in future more prudent and firmer.

The premature disclosure of our plan for the principal attack, however—in consequence of the participation of the Visocki division in the combat, rendered necessary by Klapka's defeat—could neither be undone by philosophizing, nor could we console ourselves with any well-founded hopes respecting it ; and it was only the apprehension of seeing our seventh army corps at Hatvan endangered in the highest degree by even the shortest interruption of the offensive, that determined us to persevere in the turning-mancœuvre, though it had been betrayed.

For this reason, in spite of the uncommon fatigues of the preceding evening, the first army corps had to advance on the 5th of April as far as Süly, the third as far as Szecső on the line of retreat of the enemy, leading toward Kóka, while the second corps was sent to Tó-Almás. The latter place was for us on that day the most important point to reach. For it was possible that the army of the Ban, with the rear-guard of which we had been engaged the day before near Tápió-Bicske, felt strong enough to attempt by itself near Fénsszaru to cross the Zagyva, which was watched at this point on our part only by a standing patrol, and then, appearing to the southeast of Hatvan—consequently in the rear of our seventh army corps—with the simultaneous assistance of the Schlick corps in front, to take it between two

\* After the conflict at Tápió-Bicske, it was commonly said in our army that the Visocki division had regained from the enemy the battery taken from Klapka. I do not remember, however, to have received any official report to that effect ; and as far as I could see with my own eyes, the enemy in his retreat before the Visocki division left behind on the field of battle only one long howitzer and an ammunition-chest which had caught fire.

fires. To hinder this manœuvre, or in case the Ban, though it seemed not probable, should have employed already the night between the 4th and 5th of April in executing it, to take him in the same snare which he had laid for our seventh army corps — was the strategic idea on which was based the above-mentioned direction to Tó-Almás, given to General Aulich with the second army corps.

I betook myself thither in the course of the afternoon, while my head-quarters remained behind in Szent-Márton-Káta, where at the same time Kossuth with his attendants arrived from Jász-Berény.

When I reached Tó-Almás, the corps of the Ban, coming from the west, was just passing Zsámbok, and moved in a single long column toward Fénsszaru; thus confirming our previous supposition as to the next operation of this corps.

I was determined quietly to await the beginning of his passage over the Zagyva, and then immediately to attack with the second corps, at the same time sending the third from Szecső to Dány, and the first from Süly to Kóka. The hostile column, however, when it reached the Zagyva, suddenly halted, and soon afterward turned back again, directing its march in the opposite direction toward Gödöllő.

From the position of both armies decisive conflicts being in prospect for the next two days, I preferred now to reserve the strength of the second army corps, and confined myself to harassing the marching back of the hostile corps from the Zagyva only by two squadrons of hussars.

We could not explain to ourselves on that day what the Ban could have intended by the two contrary manœuvres which followed each other in so short a time; for this momentary appearing on the Zagyva was evidently not sufficient for a demonstration against our seventh army corps, and there were far too many troops for a mere reconnoitering of the passage across the river at Fénsszaru, for which a common patrol would have been quite enough.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

ON the 6th of April the first and third army corps were ordered to advance as far as Isaszeg, the second as far as Dány. My head-quarters adjoined the latter; while I intended to await with some attendants at Kóka either the uninterruptedly executed advance, or the commencement of a probable conflict.

Considering the short distance, we had not the least doubt that the thunder of an action with artillery, if fought at Isaszeg, would be quite distinctly heard in Kóka.

Early in the forenoon the forest of Isaszeg caught fire. The rural inhabitants of the district said that the Croats had set fire to it intentionally, in order to render it impossible for our army corps to advance through it.

About midday the Damjanics and Klapka army corps encountered the Ban near Isaszeg; the thunder of artillery, however, did not penetrate over to us at Kóka, and the clouds of smoke ascending from the burning forest by their gigantic extent concealed from us the smoke of the battle at Isaszeg. Just as little prepared for the one as for the other event, I had neither made it known in the head-quarters at Dány, nor to the two army corps which had been directed to Isaszeg, that I was to be found in Kóka; and thus I did not receive till about three o'clock in the afternoon, by a hussar who had been sent in advance with my horses, a report of the commencement of the combat and of its unfavorable turn.

In alarm I hastened to reach the battle-field; having previously dispatched an officer of my suite to General Aulich with an order to start immediately with the second army corps for Isaszeg.

I had no idea that Aulich was already on his way; that the chief of the general staff, who had remained behind in Dány, had made him advance soon after the commencement of the conflict. The more gloomily, during my anxious ride from Kóka to the battle-field, I felt my hope—to call the day still ours—shrouded in night by the apprehension that Aulich would arrive too late,



the more joyously was it illumined, as by the stroke of a magic wand, when, about half a mile from Isaszeg, in the forest, which was still in flames in different parts, I suddenly saw before me the second army corps.

Almost at the same instant, an officer of hussars of the seventh army corps came galloping toward me—seemingly from the extreme left wing of the enemy—with a report that the enemy had abandoned the line of the Galga without drawing a blade, and that the seventh army corps had marched to Gödöllő. Now I believed I was quite certain of victory.

We could judge only approximately, by our ear, of the position of the battle; for the forest did not permit us to see far.

A little to the right from the direction of the forest-way on which the Aulich corps advanced to the battle-field, the thunder of cannon was the most lively, on both sides framed as it were by the crepitating fire of musketry. On the left wing the discharge of small arms seemed to be far more feeble, and the point from which it could be heard much further distant from the line of artillery-fire than that on the right.

Aulich, led by this indication, directed two battalions of his corps to the right, forward, to reinforce the extreme right wing, while he pursued unceasingly with his main body the forest-way on which he was, which seemed to lead straight to the left wing of the line of artillery-fire, as perceived by the ear. Between this point and that of the engagement of tirailleurs, which was heard, as has been said, much more to the left, we supposed there was a wide interval in our line of battle: I now took likewise the same direction, and outstripping the Aulich column, had soon left it behind me, when there suddenly emerged before me some isolated battalions of the Klapka corps, which were once more retreating as they pleased.

Consequently our ideas as to the situation of the combat were unfortunately confirmed. The left wing under Klapka had already taken to flight; only the right under Damjanics, and on the extreme left two battalions—likewise sent thither by Damjanics for Klapka's assistance—still remained.

At the mere sight of the fleeing battalions of Klapka I could scarcely contain my indignation; for the recent disgraceful behavior of these troops before Tápió-Bicske was present to my mind.

Under threats of the most degrading punishments, I ordered them to return instantly to the battle-field.

Quickly and lightly they had stepped out while retreating; now that they had again to march forward, they dragged themselves toilsomely along as if near sinking to the ground from weariness.

One of the commanders of these battalions seemed to have his heart in the right place. "My battalion retreats by the order of General Klapka!" he called to me in a haughty tone. I considered this assertion an empty excuse; but the commander of the battalion maintained it obstinately, and said that Klapka, who was not far off, and was retreating in person with his main body, would confirm it.

I hastened in search of him; and found him in the direction indicated, actually occupied with arranging his retreating main body.

To my question, what was the meaning of this retreat, while Damjanics, on the contrary, alone kept his ground on the battle-field? he declared he was forced to advise the giving up of the combat, for his infantry had not a single cartridge left, and was besides already too much exhausted. "Victory," he added, "no longer possible to-day, may be possible to-morrow;" and the expression on his features showed me that he had but spoken out his inmost conviction.

Here my authority as commander-in-chief was at an end. Klapka's conviction of the necessity of the retreat had first to be shaken, before I could expect to see my order again to attack executed.

I consequently called upon General Klapka to consider that he himself had projected the plan of attack, from the execution of which he intended to desist to-day, to find it to-morrow undoubtedly still more difficult; that he himself had recognized as an indispensable condition, the execution most punctually of the ordered dispositions day by day, and at any cost; that the reasons on which he founded his dissuasion from the combat were not at all valid, for the infantry seemed, judging by its speed in the retrograde movement, to be by no means so much exhausted, as that it could not yet essay some attacks with the bayonet, and *for this they had still cartridges enough*, even if they had absolutely fired away the last. "Conquer to-day!" I called out at last, "or back behind the Theiss! Such is the alternative. I

know of no third. Damjanics still continues the battle—Aulich advances : we *must* conquer !”

A resolute “Forward !” was the surprising reply of Klapka ; and I now hastened again to the field of battle to animate the brave Damjanics to a still further perseverance, by the joyful news of the speedy arrival of Aulich, and the renewed advance of Klapka.

The same way, which I had left a few moments ago for the purpose of finding Klapka, led me to the northwestern edge of the forest. The field of battle was now extended before me, to the right and to the left bounded in form of a bow by this edge.

The line of battle which our troops occupied—in its eastern (right) half ever firmly maintained by Damjanics, in the western (left) already given up by Klapka—leant with both wings on the last northern spurs of the forest of Isaszeg lying in our rear, these spurs projecting toward the enemy.

Before the centre of our line of battle, at gun-range distance, lay the point on which the brook Rákös, the course of which from Gödöllő thus far is a southeastern one, suddenly turns westward to the village of Isaszeg, situated immediately in front of our left wing.

We stood consequently on the *left* bank of the Rákös, parallel with its lower (western) course and its imaginary prolongation toward the east ; while the enemy was posted opposite to us—close above the deviation of the brook from southeast to west—à *cheval* of its bed : with the right wing beyond (to the north of) the burning village of Isaszeg, on the plateau of a high commanding steep ravine along the right bank, with the left wing, however, on the left bank, across the sloping ridge, which is here no longer wooded, and which, flanking the upper course of the Rákös, stretches northward to Gödöllő, and on the southern declivity of which lies that projection of the forest of Isaszeg which was occupied by our right wing.

The nature of the ground required on both sides the employment of the infantry on the extreme wings, while on the wide plain between them the battle was waged exclusively by the cavalry and the artillery.

At the moment when I arrived in the centre of our line, the point of support of our left wing (the height covered by the forest-spur to our left, which advances to the brook Rákös close below Isaszeg) had been taken by storm in spite of the obstinate resist-



ance of the two battalions which Damjanics had detached thither, as above mentioned, to reinforce Klapka. Between this point and General Damjanics' left wing (which lay in the centre of our original line of battle), opposite to the enemy's right wing, gaped the immense interval caused by Klapka's precipitate retreat. The left wing of the Damjanics army corps was consequently quite isolated. The greatest part of the cavalry of this corps, which had been concentrated here for the protection of Damjanics' left wing, was, however, already in retreat when I arrived on the spot.

I instantly stopped the retreat, and ordered the hussars immediately to march forward again at the same height as the far-advanced right wing.

While this was being executed, I rode toward that spur of the forest which—as our *right* point d'appui—the infantry of the third corps (Damjanics) still continued to defend firmly against the attacks with the bayonet made by the hostile *left* wing, and where Damjanics in person was also just then.

I found this brave man, in spite of the critical position in which Klapka's unjustifiable retreat had placed him, unshaken, undaunted. Nothing was further from his thoughts than giving up the combat; although the unsparing expressions in which he gave vent to his indignation at Klapka's behavior, plainly showed that he had by no means overlooked the danger of being taken in his left, and opened out by the hostile right wing.

I tried to tranquillize Damjanics, by assuring him that Klapka was again advancing. His confidence in Klapka, however—already greatly shaken in consequence of the day of Tápió-Bieske—seemed now to be completely destroyed.

“What avails this advance?” cried Damjanics; “if a drunken Honvéd complains of sickness, and another throws open the lid of his cartridge-box, Klapka will straightway lament afresh that his battalions are tired to death, and have no more cartridges; will immediately turn back anew, and leave me again in the lurch.”

The news of the proximity of Aulich, and of the two battalions, which, as has been mentioned, had been sent in advance from the second army corps to reinforce the extreme right wing, appeared the more to pacify General Damjanics.

The quick remark, that now it was possible to advance again, with which Damjanics received my communication that Aulich would soon arrive, not only now rendered superfluous every ex-

hortation to continued perseverance, but it made me even fear that Damjanics intended to resume directly the offensive against the hostile left wing.

I say "fear," because by the first glance at the field of battle, I had been convinced, that strategically the offensive was at present ordered *only to our left wing*, while the right had to content itself with maintaining its position.

In order to justify this conviction I must again mention the report which was made to me, before I met Klapka, by an officer of hussars of the seventh army corps relative to the advancing of this corps toward Gödöllő, on the road of Gyöngyös to Pesth.

Admitting this report to be correct, and perceiving, from the strength of the enemy immediately in front of us, that he had left behind for the protection of Gödöllő but an insignificant force, I could confidently expect the speedy and victorious appearance of our seventh corps in the rear of the hostile left wing. It could not be doubted that a defeat awaited the latter in consequence of the double attack in front and rear, of which this expectation gave prospect. This wing could avoid the danger of this double attack only by a well-timed retreat to Gödöllő. A premature offensive on the part of our troops nearest to it would have directly *forced* him to this saving retreat, and this the more certainly the more victorious they should be. By such a premature offensive of our right\* wing we should consequently destroy our prospective defeat of the hostile left.

The chief duty of our right wing consequently was to remain on the defensive until the first discharge of cannon from the seventh army corps in the rear of the hostile left should be heard. Not till that welcome signal was our right wing allowed to assume the offensive.

Very differently stood affairs with our left wing and with the right of the enemy.

The latter was in possession of a strong position for artillery to the north of Isaszeg. From thence it protected the place itself, as well as the road which passes through it to the capitals. This was indeed the task with which the enemy's right wing seemed willing mainly to content itself. Its delaying to advance from its strong position against General Damjanics' left wing, exposed by Klapka's retreat, betrayed this clearly enough.

\* In the original "linken," *left*; but evidently a misprint.—*Transl.*

Here, therefore, nothing was to be gained by the defensive on our part; while an energetic attack might obtain for our left wing possession of the right bank of the Rákös, and at the same time the possibility of keeping even pace with the *later* offensive of our right wing.

I now hastily communicated these views to General Damjanics; since, as has been mentioned, his animated exclamation, that the advance could now immediately begin again, made me *fear* a *premature* offensive of our right wing.

Damjanics, however, showed that he quite agreed in my views, and at once assured me that he would confine himself meanwhile to maintaining the forest-spur on our extreme right wing, while I hastened in the first instance to take the guidance of the battle in the centre.

The cavalry of the third corps, which I had only just ordered to advance, was once more in retreat when I reached it after the conversation with Damjanics.

Several hostile projectiles quickly succeeding one another had struck its ranks. The men intended to abandon this violently attacked point. I had to prevent them.

The head of the Aulich army corps was already so near the edge of the forest, that it could reach it in a few minutes, in order immediately to deploy *en front* to the left of the Damjanics corps. The opening, however, was situated just in the direction of the hostile front fire by which the hussars were then suffering.

A retreat of the latter would have brought the fire still nearer to the opening, and have indirectly endangered Aulich's deploying. At the same time large masses of cavalry emerged in front of our centre.

In order to anticipate their onset, and likewise for the purpose of silencing as quickly as possible this galling fire (if I remember rightly, it came from a rocket-battery), I sent the second regiment of hussars (Hanover) to attack.

Whether a part of the third regiment of hussars (Ferdinand)—perhaps a division\*—assisted also, I can not now say with certainty.

In the very beginning of the advance the hussars got into the line of the oblique fire of the enemy's guns planted to the right of our centre; allowed themselves, from the dreaded activity of

\* Half of a regiment of cavalry.—*Transl.*



these guns, to swerve from the straight direction, and fell into a marked deviation to the left.

The masses of hostile cavalry in front of our centre, at first concealed from my sight by the beginning of the attack, now became visible again on the right of the hussars in consequence of this deviation to the left.

Fearing that the hussars might be overtaken in their right flank, I caused them, having at that moment no others at my disposal, to be followed *en débandade* by a platoon of the third regiment of hussars (Ferdinand), which was posted near there for the protection of the battery of the left wing of the third corps.

An uncommonly vehement fire of serried masses of infantry suddenly called my attention off from the centre to the extreme right wing.

The attack was in progress, the straight fire of the hostile centre was already silenced, the van of the Aulich army corps was debouching from the forest, and during it was not distracted by the oblique fire of the guns of the hostile left wing. I consequently thought I could leave without uneasiness the centre for some time, in order to convince myself personally how matters stood in the forest-spur to our right, where the battle, as has been mentioned, had now become very hot.

When I had advanced some distance into the wood which forms this forest-spur, toward the extreme right wing, it seemed to me as if I had come just between the enemy's and our line of tirailleurs; for I heard firing simultaneously to the right and to the left before me: I could not, however, perceive either to the right or left the tirailleurs themselves. I believed consequently that our sharp-shooters had already retreated very far, and turned immediately to the right for the purpose of overtaking them and driving them again forward. I now met the two battalions sent in advance from the Aulich corps, when it was on its way to assist the right wing. Their *éclaireurs*, confused by the fury of the combat on the furthestmost line, were firing at random before them during their advance. The brave battalions of the third corps—again repulsing just then a desperate attack of the hostile left wing with that vehement fire of tirailleurs which I had supposed, in the first moment of surprise, to come from the enemy—were thus taken in the rear by the fire of their own succourers.

I hastened to stop this dangerous confusion, and then returned again to the centre.

My first glance, when, on riding out of the forest-spur, I gained an unobstructed prospect, fell upon the opposite wooded declivity to our left.

The flashing of the separate shots in the twilight of the evening enabled me distinctly to perceive on that declivity two parallel lines of fire, which approached ever nearer the village of Isaszeg.

From this I discovered with satisfaction that Klapka had been in earnest with his resolute "Forward!" by which he had interrupted my representations against continuing his retreat. He had resumed the offensive in an energetic manner.

In front of our centre I saw the hussars returning from the attack. They were still so far off, that it was impossible to decide whether they were pursued or not. Fearing that the former might be the case, I intended just to ride toward them, for the purpose of trying if their flight could not be put a stop to, when the hussars seemed suddenly to halt. And not without reason; for one of Aulich's batteries, having been planted in the centre, while they were attacking, and I was with the right wing, had taken the return of our cavalry for an attack of the enemy's horse, and had directed its fire against it. I discovered this mistake, so destructive to the hussars, soon enough to spare them its further sad consequences; unfortunately, however, they had suffered considerable loss from the fire of this battery *before* I again reached the centre.

In spite of this misfortune they had remained in good order, and returned—by no means pursued by the enemy—back again to the position they had occupied before the onset.

After this attack the enemy did not again disturb our centre. But on both wings the combat still raged—most vehemently on our right. The hostile left wing had already repeated his vigorous attacks several times with scattering impetuosity, and hereby had soon rendered the defensive of our right wing, at first voluntary, now a necessity; for the combat in the forest, which lasted several hours, dispersed our battalions; so that if an offensive was to be assumed with them, they would first have to be rallied again, and for this some time was needed, which, with the repeated assaults of the hostile left wing, could not be spared.

In vain had I been expecting every minute till sunset the

emerging of our seventh army corps in the rear of the dangerous enemy.

The seventh corps was nowhere to be seen ; and the hostile left wing could, unimpeded continue his attacks till the last gleam of evening twilight.

The deep darkness of the night at last commanded the suspension of hostilities here also. The combat had already ceased on all sides. But still I knew not whether we had conquered. . . .

In the centre, where I commanded in person, the combat had not been decisive, the efforts of the enemy against this point being weak and inconsiderable.

The contest had been decisive only on both wings.

To call the day ours, Damjanics ought to have maintained his position, Aulich and Klapka taken Isaszeg by storm.

The painful feeling of uncertainty about this urged me to hasten first to the right wing. About it I was the most anxious ; for, as is known, the erroneous report of the advance of our seventh corps had induced me, in spite of the attacks of the enemy here being the most dangerous, to have this point most feebly occupied, only with about the fourth part of the infantry, while the other three-fourths were employed against Isaszeg.

It seemed to me, consequently, to be a good omen for the issue of the battle, that I found Damjanics still in his former position. Neither himself nor his adversary had yielded. Both had encamped on the field of battle.

I had soon returned again to the centre, in the expectation that perhaps a report from the left wing had meanwhile arrived there. Its arrival, however, was delayed too long for my impatience : so, accompanied by some officers, I rode straight to Isaszeg, for the purpose of learning as soon as possible in whose possession the place was. Not far from it, a challenge in German made us start. It might be the enemy ; but it might also be one of those old hussars, to whom the identity of the Hungarian "*Allj-ki vagy ?*" with the German "*Halt ! wer da ?*" (*Halt ! who goes there ?*) was still not quite clear.

We replied in Hungarian. "Aulich" was the answer. It was he indeed. Returning from Isaszeg, he brought the joyful news, that the right wing of the enemy was retreating toward Gödöllő.

The victory was *ours* !



## CHAPTER XL.

WITH the victory at Isaszeg, Hungary, alas, was already to have attained the culminating point of her greatness. So Kosuth willed it!

The enemy's victory at Kápolna had as its consequence the proclamation of the *octroyed* constitution of the 4th of March, 1849, for United Austria.

This constitution on its birthday presupposed Hungary to be conquered, and while it gave a prospect to the peoples of Austria of constitutional happiness, after the expiration of a provisional eternity, it destroyed at the same time the Hungarian constitution of the year 1848, together with the ancient rights of the kingdom of Hungary, which it declared to be a political corpse, courageously mutilated this corpse, and by way of precaution poured over the wounded surfaces the permanently dissociating aquafortis of the equal right of the nationalities, that the amputated limbs might not unite again to the trunk, even on the day of the apocalyptically-promised constitutional resurrection.

The provisionally mutilated kingdom of Hungary, however, chanced still to number some soldiers with whom the octroyed abortion of Austria's centralists availed no more than the value of the paper which imposed on the astonished world the assumption, that the battle of Kápolna had been the unexpected throes of this untimely birth, and that, consequently, Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz also had, in some measure, assisted at the delivery.

These soldiers of Hungary were of opinion that the Vienna ministers might continue till death octroying, centralizing, and proclaiming equal rights, without thereby changing the limits of even one single *pussta*, so long as Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz remained captivated by the illusion that he had fulfilled his mission to Hungary *non plus ultra* by the victory at Kápolna, and that he could settle the rest merely by forcibly collecting declarations of submission.

These soldiers of Hungary greeted the octroyed constitution as the presumed deliverer from the painful incertitude in which they had been placed by the true Hegira of the Hungarian revolution—Kossuth's flight from Pesth to Debreczin; the incertitude, namely, whether the more decided enemies of the constitution of the year 1848 dwelt "*beyond the March and Lajtha*," or "*beyond the Theiss*;" whether they had chiefly to resist the troops of the former, the army of Prince Windischgrätz, or the champions of the latter, the Poles and republicans.

By the octroyed constitution, on the one hand, the duplicity with which Prince Windischgrätz called himself and his army within the frontiers of Hungary "constitutional," was indeed placed in the clearest light; on the other hand, the legality of the standing of these soldiers of Hungary was so clearly and distinctly proved, that it immediately appeared incontestable even to the doubters by profession.

It would have been denying *ex professo* to President Kossuth every trace of mother-wit to suppose that, whatever were his political tendencies, after the appearance of the octroyed constitution he could even for a moment think to force Hungary from its defensive position—at an earlier period already imposingly firm, and by the new constitution become completely unassailable—into an offensive one, by which it could obtain, besides the approbation of fools, only Russo-Austrian blows, and at most the part—unworthy of a manly nation—of a competitor with the Polish emigration for the happiness of being pitied by sentimental Europe.

On the modest supposition, consequently, that kind dame Nature had not withheld from President Kossuth such a small degree of mother-wit as sufficed for this latter recognition, the Poles and fatherland republicans—the champions, as has been mentioned, of those enemies of the constitution of 1848 living "*beyond the Theiss*"—appeared to *us* (I believe it is self-evident, that I reckoned myself also among those "soldiers" of Hungary here spoken of) as harmless cavaliers, to whom fate seemed to have assigned as the element wherein they had to live and move, hardly the living stream of the history, at most the marsh of the *chronique scandaleuse*, of Hungary.

We considered them hardly worth notice; but believed we had discovered *what* Hungary exclusively wanted, when we

answered the octroyed constitution briefly and firmly with the days of Hatvan, Tápió-Bieske, and Isaszeg.

We believed, on the one hand, that Kossuth's overweening arrogance had been reduced within the bounds of attainable, reasonable aims by the unhappy conclusion of the year 1848, the warning proclamation of Waizen, the disgraceful *début* of Dembinski, the defeats of Bem from time to time, the realized attempt at Russian intervention in Transylvania ; by the loss of the fortress of Esseg, of the Banat and the Bácska ; but especially by the greatness of the sacrifices which the late successes on the field of battle had cost us : on the other hand, that his confidence in our honest resolve to defend to the last the rights of the country had been firmly established by these same successes of our arms.

We hoped, further, that Hungary would deem it her honor to resemble a man, who, conscious of his strength, and alike removed from arrogance and despondency, entering the lists in a good cause—and only in such—aspires to a noble prize, even should it be death on the shield.

Nay, we confidently expected that the nation with heart and soul would join us, who had not wavered in misfortune, who resolved not to grow giddy in prosperity.

Vain, however, was all our believing, hoping, expecting !

Kossuth thought on the unhappy conclusion of the year 1848, only to admire the ingenuity of his flight from Pesth to Debreczin. The warning proclamation of Waizen, Dembinski's disgraceful *début*, were considered by him as clear proof of *my* striving for the military dictatorship. From Bem's defeats, the losses of Esseg, Banat, and the Bácska, he deduced only the mischievous conclusion, that Hungary having not much more to lose, had the more to gain. In regard to the attempt at intervention on the part of Russia, he fondly dreamt of the infallibility of the counter-interventions of France, England, Germany, America, and Turkey in favor of Hungary ; and while he under-valued the heavy sacrifices which had purchased our recent victories, the victories themselves served only to raise his arrogance to absolute madness, and *Kossuth's madness was unfortunately the gospel of the credulous nation.*

Had Kossuth possessed the courage to share only once the dangers in the battle-field of those whose victories he—so full of



his own importance—considered to be the immediate emanations of his personal presence at the head-quarters, the end of the next week would have found him, if not wiser, at least more prudent.

But he lacked this courage; and Hungary, as has been said, was to have attained with the victory of Isaszeg the culminating point of her greatness.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

IN consequence of the retreat of the enemy's right wing from Isaszeg to Gödöllő, their left also had necessarily to evacuate the field, and this during the night, which put an end to the battle of Isaszeg. The left retreated likewise to Gödöllő.

The advance on our part to the attack of the camp which the enemy had established in front of this place ought to have commenced very early in the morning of the 7th of April. Our reserve of ammunition, however, had not yet arrived, on account of the delay caused by the precautionary measures rendered indispensable by its passage through the burning places of the Isaszeg forest, and our need of ammunition obliged us to await at Isaszeg till its arrival.

Meanwhile it was discovered that that part of the battle-field lying nearest to Isaszeg was thick-sown with still-unopened packets of cartridges, which the men of the Klapka battalions had thrown away on the previous day, without doubt during the first moments of the encounter, in order to induce General Klapka, by showing him their empty cartridge-boxes, to give up the combat. Klapka having assigned as the principal reason for his first retreating from Isaszeg, that his battalions had no cartridges, I can not forbear calling the sudden idea (although obsolete) of these battalions of unhesitatingly throwing away their cartridges a very successful one—but only in the case of Klapka.

The reserve of ammunition at last arrived at Isaszeg; but among the cartridges distributed to the infantry some were discovered the contents of which consisted for the most part of common road-dust. I never learnt who it was that had acquired

for himself this new kind of merit in the eyes of the hostile army.

It may be conceived that separating the cartridges filled with sand delayed still further our advance against Gödöllő; and Field-marshal Windischgrätz found thus sufficient time to enter unmolested on his retreat from Gödöllő toward the capitals, chosen from strategic reasons (*sic*).

His rear-guard had already reached Kerepes, when we again united with the seventh army corps at Gödöllő, toward which it had been likewise advancing by Bag and Aszód.

The seventh army corps had received—if I mistake not—on the 5th of April an order to take Aszód in the course of the 6th, and to secure for itself the passage across the Galga for the 7th, on which day it had to advance on the offensive against Gödöllő.

On the 5th the enemy had advanced with numerous forces from Aszód toward Hatvan, and seemed at first to intend to attack the position of the seventh corps there, but under the protection of his cavalry he soon moved back again toward Aszód.

The commander of the seventh army corps now attacked this cavalry with two divisions of hussars, and was repulsed with loss.

Nevertheless, conformably to the received order, the day after (6th of April) he assumed the offensive with his whole corps—with the divisions of the left (Pöltenberg) and of the right wing against Aszód, and with that of the centre (Kmetz) against Bag—but found these places already evacuated by the enemy. The officer who—as has been mentioned in Chapter XXXIX.—met me in the forest of Isaszeg, while on my way from Kóka to the battle-field, was sent to me by him from Aszód with a report that the advance of his corps to Aszód and Bag was accomplished. This officer, during his ride from Aszód toward the right wing of our position before Isaszeg, while crossing the main road to Bag had probably remarked by chance the Kmetz division marching along it, and taken it for the whole seventh army corps advancing against Gödöllő. Hence the positiveness with which he announced to me that the seventh army corps was already on its direct march to Gödöllő.

Colonel Kmetz, arrived with his division in Bag, heard there the thunder of cannon from Isaszeg, which was not audible at

Aszód, and really importuned the commander of the seventh army corps to begin the offensive against Gödöllő *immediately*, although his orders fixed it not till the next day; but in vain! The commander thought he was obliged to confine himself to observing the orders received from the head-quarters.

However, Colonel Kmety did not allow himself by any means to be prevented by the scruples of his commander from advancing at least with his division alone against Gödöllő. But when half-way thither, before the convent of Besenyő, he encountered a hostile position, to force which his small body was not sufficient; and the Damjanies, Aulich, and Klapka army corps had consequently to gain the victory at Isaszeg without the co-operation of the seventh army corps.

It is true that now—in consequence of the excessive dread the commander of the seventh army corps had of undertaking any step which exceeded the distinctly prescribed line—the merit of these three army corps in the victory at Isaszeg, as well as the moral importance of this victory in favor of the Hungarian arms, seemed much raised; nevertheless we had the more seriously to regret that the commander of the seventh army corps had not followed Kmety's wise advice, because, by not doing so, time was given to the enemy to avoid a defeat which was more than probable, considering the reciprocal position of the armies on the 6th of April.

After the junction had been effected, on the 7th of April, in Gödöllő, between the army corps which were advancing from Isaszeg and the seventh corps, a part of the latter was charged with the pursuit of the enemy, who was retreating toward the capitals. This pursuit had, however, small result, and after the exchange of some shots with the hostile rear-guard, was immediately abandoned again.

M\*.



## CHAPTER XLII.

IN the course of the 7th of April, a few hours after our entry, Kossuth also, with his attendants, arrived at Gödöllő. He appeared satisfied with the services of the army, and spoke much and well of the eternal thanks of the nation.

After a while he desired to converse with me alone in his chamber. On this occasion I obtained the first indications of the leading tendency of his politics.

Now—said he—the time is come to answer the octroyed constitution of the 4th of March by the separation of Hungary from Austria.

The patience of the nation—he continued—was exhausted; if it would show itself at all worthy of liberty, it must not only not tolerate the unreasonable assumption of the octroyed constitution, but it must moreover exact heavy reprisals. The peoples of Europe would judge of the worth of the Hungarian nation according to the answer it should give to that constitution. Their sympathies would depend upon that judgment (*sic.*) England, France, Italy, Turkey, even all Germany itself, not excepting Austria's own hereditary states, were waiting only till Hungary should proclaim itself an independent state, to impart to it their material aid, and that the more abundantly, as they had hitherto been sparing of it. The sore-tried, oppressed sister nation of the Poles would speedily follow the example of Hungary, and united with it would find a powerful ally, both for defense and offense, in the Porte, whose interests had so often suffered from the policy of Austria and Russia. With the freedom of Hungary, the freedom of Europe would fall; with Hungary's triumph there would be as many successful risings against hated tyranny as there were oppressed peoples in Europe.

"Our victory is certain," were nearly the words in which he continued; "but we can do much more than for ourselves alone, we can and must fight and conquer for the freedom of all who wish us the victory. Our word, however, must precede the

deed, our cry of victory, the assured victory itself, and announce its redeeming approach to all enslaved peoples, that they may be watchful and prepared, that they may not stupidly sleep away the moments destined for their salvation, and so afford time for our common enemies again to recover, to assemble and strengthen themselves anew. We can not be silent now that the octroyed constitution has denied our very existence. Our silence would be half a recognition of these acts, and all our victories would be fruitless! We must therefore declare ourselves! But a declaration such as I should wish would raise the self-esteem of the nation, would at once destroy all the bridges behind the still undecided and wavering parties within and without the Diet, would by the proximity and importance of a common object force into the background mere party interests, and would thus facilitate and hasten the sure victory."

"All this is not quite clear to me," was nearly my answer. "Words will not make Hungary free; deeds can alone do that. And no arm out of Hungary will execute those deeds; but rather armies will be raised to prevent their execution. Yet, granted that Hungary of itself were strong enough at the present moment to dissociate itself from Austria, would it not be too weak to maintain itself as an independent state in a neighborhood in which the Porte, in spite of a much more favorable position, has already been reduced to an existence by sufferance only? We have lately beaten the enemy repeatedly—that is undeniable. But we have accomplished this only with the utmost exertion of our powers. The consciousness *that our cause was just* has enabled us to effect this. *The separation of Hungary from Austria would no longer be a just cause*; the struggle for this would not be a struggle *for*, but *against* the law; not a struggle for self-defense, but an attack on the existence of the united Austrian monarchy. And while we should hereby mortally wound innumerable ancient interests and sympathies; while we should hereby conjure up against our own country all the unhappy consequences of a revolution uncalled for by any circumstances; while we should hereby force the old troops, the very kernel of our army to violate their oath, and thus morally shake them—we should find ourselves weaker day by day; while at the same time in every neighboring state a natural ally of our opponents would arise *against us*, THE DISTURBERS OF THE

BALANCE OF POWER IN EUROPE. 'We can not put up with the octroyed constitution in silence!' Granted! but is what we have just done 'putting up with it in silence?' Could we have answered the octroyed constitution of the 4th of March more strikingly than we have done? I can not decide what, or how much, is advantageous to the peoples of Europe; but that to the peoples of Hungary the smallest victory on the battle-field brings more profit and honor than the most arrogant declaration, I see clearly enough; and I once more repeat, that battles *won* for the legitimate King Ferdinand V. and the constitution sanctioned by him, are the best answers that Hungary can give to the chimeras of the Austrian ministers."

Kossuth inquired doubtingly, whether I really believed that the old troops had ever thought seriously of Ferdinand V. and the constitution of the year 1848.

"Of what else should they have thought," I exclaimed, "when, immediately after the evacuation of the capitals, determined on a voluntary departure to the enemy's camp, the *only* means that remained to retain them for the Hungarian cause—which is principally indebted to them for its success hitherto—was my proclamation of Waizen? What was the real signification of that demonstration which my corps d'armée, without my participation or knowledge, proposed to make against General Dembinski, in Kaschau, but their anxiety lest in me they should lose a commander who respected their military oath? I have shared prosperity and adversity with these troops. I know their feelings. And should King Ferdinand V. stand here before us now, I would invite him, without the slightest hesitation, I—unarmed and unprotected—to follow me into the camp, and receive their homage; for I am certain there is not one in it who would refuse it to him."

Kossuth, apparently but little edified by my want of enthusiasm for his political ideas, abruptly broke off our conference; nor did he ever mention to me one syllable more of the separation of Hungary from Austria.

It is even now an unrevealed mystery to me whether he ever communicated these ideas to the other leaders of the troops, and if so when, and with what success.

A second subject of discourse in Gödöllő between Kossuth and myself was, what means should be taken to secure a humane



treatment to our officers made prisoners by the hostile army. It was reported that the Hungarians in general, but especially the officers, who had been captured, were treated in the enemy's camp with unexampled inhumanity; that the latter were considered as guilty of high-treason, no notice whatever being taken of those officially managed intrigues—not by Hungary, however—through which the troops who had sworn to the Hungarian constitution were forced into a hostile position against their former comrades.

This subject had already been discussed in Debreczin before the Committee of Defense, in consequence of which a letter from the war-minister to the commander of the hostile army reached our head-quarters, which was to be laid before the President Kossuth, and after his approval, forwarded to the hostile outposts.

The tone of this letter, however, would have been well calculated to convince Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz, that on the 2d, 4th, and 6th of April he had in fact as totally beaten us as his memorable bulletins strove to make the world believe was the case.

It was consequently rejected; and I myself drew up a letter for the commander of the Austrian invading army in Hungary, wherein I assured him, among other things, that we intended to respond to every single execution of Hungarian officers taken prisoners, by the execution of three Austrian officers from among our captives.

This declaration was now forwarded—after Kossuth had expressed his satisfaction with it—in several copies to the hostile outposts.

The third and at that time most pressing question which I discussed with Kossuth in Gödöllő related to the object to be next chosen for the operations of our army.

Kossuth was of opinion that we should immediately advance from Gödöllő by the shortest line against the capitals, and take them by storm. Not without difficulty could he be dissuaded from this idea. For—said he—all our victories had no real importance, so long as the capitals remained occupied by the enemy. Only their reconquest could afford to the country a real proof of the success of our work of liberation. This alone was able quickly to raise the spirit of the nation, and give it strength to endure. This, above all, must be kept in view;—for that with the failure of the nation's hope of a quick and

favorable final result of these war-operations would fail also simultaneously all the resources so urgently demanded for the energetic continuance of the combat.

Nevertheless, how incontestable soever this assertion of Kossuth's, instead of the capitals, *Komorn* had to be chosen as the next object of operations, even though there was danger that the nation, through the delay hence resulting to the reconquest of Buda-Pesth, should fall back into its former condition of discouragement.

I endeavored consequently to convince the President, that to pay immediate attention to the wishes of those who rated the reconquest of the capitals higher than the deliverance of *Komorn*, would be to commit a grave strategic error. Apart from this, that these wishes must find a satisfaction alike tragic and defective in the probable result of the operation for attacking the capitals from the left bank of the Danube: a tragic one, because thereby the defenseless Pesth would be exposed to all the miseries of a besieged town; a defective one, because it was not conceivable that we should be able from Pesth to drive out the enemy, who, it might be foreseen, would settle in *Ofen*.

At the same time I thought it necessary to call the President's attention to the fact, that, on account of the peculiarity of our next movements, it would not henceforth be so easy as it had hitherto been, to find for him a perfectly safe abode in the proximity of the army, as it would be at the expense of the unembarrassed pursuit of our strategic aims.

After a long debate Kossuth seemed at last to be convinced of all this, and refrained afterward not only from making any objection to the execution of our further operations—to be directed next to the deliverance of the fortress of *Komorn*—but also resolved on returning from *Gödöllö* to *Debreczin*, for which place he set out—if I mistake not—on the 10th of April.

But however ardently Kossuth while on the way may have mused over what was most for Hungary's benefit, two things, at all events, he appears to have overlooked:

1. That Hungary had already plenty to do, if it would guard itself meanwhile from the blessings of the octroyed constitution and its appendix of provisos—the tape-worm, by which, as soon as born, it was enfeebled—if it would remain in possession of its rights; and

2. That Hungary, if it strove to be independent of Austria, resembled a fool, who should wish to separate his head and arms from his trunk, that he might be able to walk about more easily.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

I do not remember that any one else of importance in the Hungarian camp, except Dembinski and Kossuth, had ever seriously entertained the idea of regaining the capitals by means of an actual attack, directed on the left bank of the Danube. But if, nevertheless, Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz, or his temporary substitute, believed the realization of such an idea on our part to be probable, it was most opportune for us; since, while we had first only the deliverance of Komorn in view, it may easily be conceived that it must have been of very great importance to us to make the enemy believe that we thought of nothing else but the immediate reconquest of the city of Pesth.

With this view, the chief of the general staff of the army, who, like myself, was acting *ad interim*, projected the following plan of operations:

“The seventh army corps to gain the line of Fót-Dunakeszi, and interrupt the direct communication between Waizen and the capitals on the Danube, as well as on its left bank.

“The second army corps (Aulich)—reinforced by a small independent column, which, during the advance of the principal army on the road of Gyöngyös toward Gödöllő, had been left behind to secure the passages across the Theiss at Szolnok and Czibakháza, and had been ordered to follow on the railway-line of Szolnok only after the day of Tápió-Bieske—to occupy the main road of Kerepes, the road of Keresztur, and the railway-line of Szolnok.

“Both these army corps to demonstrate from their positions in the direction of Pesth.

“Meanwhile the third (Damjanics) and first (Klapka) army corps to march on the shortest line from Gödöllő to Waizen, take this town, if it be occupied by the enemy, and continue their



march without interruption by Rétság, Nagy-Oroszi, Ipolyság, to Lévenecz (Léva.)

“As soon as the two last-named army corps have taken Waizen, the two army divisions of the wings of the seventh corps to follow them from Dunakeszi, while the division of the centre (Kmety) continues by itself the demonstration against Pesth, thus masking the departure of the other two divisions.

“After the third, first, and the above-mentioned two-thirds of the seventh army corps have finally left Waizen on the road indicated toward Lévenecz, the second army corps (Aulich) to undertake, besides the line of demonstration which had till then been assigned it, that likewise of the Kmety division, while the latter to start for Waizen, and remain there.

“The further operations of the main column directed by Waizen to Lévenecz will be, to cross over the river Gran, and deliver the fortress of Komorn.”

We could herein by no means assume so much passivity on the part of the commander of the hostile main army concentrated before Pesth, as, to our astonishment, he subsequently displayed. We had to expect that, weary at last of the ever-repeated demonstrations with which General Aulich had to regale him, he would exchange the defensive for the offensive, in order to rid himself once for all of his troublesome adversary. The consequences of this must have been to threaten next the lines of communication which had hitherto existed between the main body of our army—on its march by Lévenecz to Komorn—and the government as well as war-supplies existing behind the Theiss.

The most important of these lines of communication was the main road of Gyöngyös. However many were the advantages it offered us, both on account of its shortness and practicability, we had nevertheless to prepare to renounce the regular use of it during the continuance of the above-indicated operations. As a compensation for its loss, the road leading from Miskolcz by Putnok, Lossonez, Balassa-Gyarmat, and Ipolyság to Lévenecz, must serve our turn.

The rendering both lines of communication as secure as possible was the principal task of the Kmety division in Waizen; which moreover, had to preserve the connection between the main body of our army on the Gran and the second army corps

before Pesth, as well as to serve the latter as a reserve in case of necessity.

I was firmly resolved to keep steadily in view the deliverance of Komorn, even at the risk of the hostile main army before Pesth meanwhile assuming the offensive against our isolated second army corps (Aulich.)

In this latter case, as a matter of course there would remain for Aulich nothing else to do than—after disputing every inch of ground with the enemy as long as possible—to begin his eccentric retreat toward Tiszafüred, Szolnok, and Czibakháza, and confine himself, if it came to the worst, to the occupation of the points of passage across the Theiss, particularly easy to maintain during the inundation.

In other respects, a continuous offensive on the part of the hostile main army encamped before Pesth against Aulich, and consequently against the basis of our operations, appeared to me already less alarming, because Kossuth, before his departure from Gödöllő to Debreczin, had assured me, by all that is sacred, that General Bem was already on his march from Transylvania, which had meanwhile been completely reconquered, toward Baja on the lower Danube, and would certainly have crossed the river there by the middle of April with a force of at least 16,000 men, in order to turn immediately to the north toward Raab, and after effecting the junction of his troops with ours would take the chief command of the whole army in Vetter's place.

This certainty moreover considerably lessened the reasonable apprehension that the commander of the hostile main army before Pesth, by the first, best energetic offensive attempt against Aulich, would convince himself of the numerical weakness of the troops of his opponent, and therein immediately recognizing our real intentions, would oppose them with energy on the shortest line from Pesth-Ofen by Gran (Esztergom) and the bridge over the Danube there; for in this case Bem's appearing in the rear of the enemy would easily release our main column in the valley of the Gran.

Thus the more confidently was the execution of the above-communicated plan of operations commenced on the 8th of April, 1849, from Gödöllő.

In the mean time a hostile courier, sent from Waizen to Gödöllő, fell into our hands. His dispatches confirmed the suppo-

sition that Waizen was garrisoned by the enemy; the imperial Götz and Jablonowski brigades were stationed there.

In the evening of the 10th of April I received in Gödöllő, by an orderly officer of General Damjanics, a report that Waizen had been taken by storm by the third army corps (Damjanics) in the course of the forenoon, in spite of the obstinate resistance of the two imperial brigades.

That the hostile commander-in-chief did not, from this storming of Waizen, already discover what were our intentions, I can only explain on the supposition that he had really taken for a stronger corps that insignificant expeditionary column of the seventh army corps which—as has been said in the XXXVIth Chapter—had been sent about the middle of March from Miskolcz, originally against the Slavonian militia, who at that time had been left behind in Kaschau and Eperjes by the Götz and Jablonowski brigades, which column however, was afterward directed toward Komorn.

The hostile Colonel Almásy, detached into the valley of the upper Eipel, probably to destroy this expeditionary column, with a force notoriously more than sufficient for the purpose, succeeded in reaching Lossonecz toward the end of March. Here, however, he allowed himself to be surprised in bright midday by this expeditionary column; a part of his troops, together with the military chest, to be taken from him; and himself for ever deterred from any further offensive.

Our slender expeditionary column—consisting, as is well known, of only a few hundred infantry, thirty-two hussars, and two guns—in the enemy's account of this mishap had probably increased to the bulk of an army corps, and thus led the commander of the hostile army, concentrated before Pesth, to suppose that this presumed Hungarian army corps—closely following after the column of the Austrian Colonel Almásy, which after the sudden attack at Lossonecz was retreating helter-skelter toward the Danube—had suddenly appeared before Waizen, and had driven from thence the Götz and Jablonowski brigades, intending immediately to join the main body of our army in the attack on the position of the Austrian main army before Pesth.

The moral impression of this surprise at Lossonecz seemed moreover, during our offensive operations against Gödöllő, to have already influenced Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz in



the disposition of his troops. At least the circumstance that the hostile army corps under Field-marshal Lieut. Csórich still continued to occupy Waizen during the battle of Isaszeg—which the enemy might have foreseen with certainty for at least thirty-six hours—can likewise be explained only on the assumption that the expeditionary column of the seventh army corps, which had surprised Colonel Almásy in Lossonecz, had been seen by him in the multiplying-glass of the first panic terror—a mockery indeed of all calculation—and its numerical strength at least twenty times over-estimated; and that Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz had necessarily been induced by the result of this exaggeration to dispose the Csórich army corps on the road from Waizen to Lossonecz.

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

THE news of the successful dislodgment from Waizen of the Götz and Jablonowski brigades determined me to transfer the head-quarters during the night between the 10th and 11th of April from Gödöllő to that town.

There I first learned the following important details of the engagement:

When General Damjanics, appearing with the third army corps before Waizen, observed the enemy's preparations for a serious defensive, he at the same time saw that the opportunity was favorable for completely destroying or forthwith capturing him.

With this view, the first army corps (Klapka), which followed close behind the third (Damjanics), was to turn the town of Waizen to the east, masked by the ground, and occupy the enemy's only line of retreat, the road from Waizen to Veröcze, while the third corps had to obstruct him in front until this manœuvre should be executed.

Klapka, agreeing in this plan, prepared immediately to execute the turning; but nevertheless did not reach the fitting centre of gravity of the hostile line of retreat until the enemy, meanwhile retreating from Waizen had passed it.

Klapka now attributed to the undue haste of General Damjanics, the latter to Klapka's tardiness, the failure of the manœuvre calculated for the complete defeat of the enemy: while the mediating supposition, that Klapka's intention had been detected by the enemy before it was too late, and had been frustrated by an accelerated retreat, seemed to be contradicted by the obstinacy with which the enemy had endeavored to dispute with General Damjanics every foot of ground, nay even the town itself.

This disagreement between the two commanders of corps, Damjanics and Klapka, originating from the day of Tápió-Bicske, and considerably heightened by that of Isaszeg, assumed thus, in consequence of the day of Waizen, a character that gave rise to serious reflection.

Moreover, on this day, besides Klapka, the colonel and commander of the cavalry of the third corps, Nagy-Sándor, and the Polish legion, some hundred men strong, had also drawn upon themselves the most violent indignation of General Damjanics: Nagy-Sándor, because during the engagement he complied with an order to advance, perhaps in an equally satisfactory manner as that in which we remember he executed the order to pursue on the day of Tápió-Bicske; the Polish legion through the following:

The bridge at the southern extremity of Waizen—briskly defended by the hostile tirailleurs, who had been pressed back to the very skirts of the town—was to be taken by storm. The same Hungarian staff-officer, who on the 4th of April had so gloriously distinguished himself as commander of the third Honvéd battalion at the storming of the bridge across the Tápió, animated the Polish legion, stationed not far off, to the storm, and intended, by seizing their banner, to lead them on in person. The Polish standard-bearer, however, refused to part with the banner intrusted to him, and the whole legion declined to storm.

This bridge was now taken by the sections of the third and ninth Honvéd battalions in just as resolute a manner as that across the Tápió on the 4th of April had been won; and the same heroic staff-officer, who here again led the storm with the banner, had his horse killed under him.

After the loss of the bridge the enemy was no longer able to hold the southern entrance of Waizen; the third and ninth bat-

talions drove him back at first into the interior of the town, until at last he began to evacuate it without further resistance.

The battalions of the third corps now assembled themselves, and formed one marching-column arranged in the order in which they had penetrated into the town; but the Polish legion, who, as has been said, had refused to storm the bridge, and who, even during the further fight-like advance into the interior of the town, had only hobbled behind the third and ninth Honvéd battalions, now knew how to gain, during the rallying, the head of this column, and by this trick to make it appear as if the honor of the day belonged to it.

I had enough to do to put an end, on the one hand, to the disputes between Damjanics and the officers of both his cavalry regiments, who espoused the side of their commanders against him; on the other, to the serious collisions between the Polish legion and the Honvéd battalions.

The enemy numbered also among his losses in the combat of the 10th of April, Major-general Götz: mortally wounded, he fell into our hands, and died the day after.

According to our plan of operations, the main body of our army—the third army corps (Damjanics), the first (Klapka), and two-thirds of the seventh corps—after the taking by storm of Waizen, began its march without delay to Lévenecz; the army division under Kmety was removed from Dunakeszi to Waizen; and a part of the second army corps (Aulich) undertook in its stead the occupation of Dunakeszi.

For the protection, on the one hand, of the left flank of the main body marching to the north, on the other, of the Kmety division in Waizen, against the hostile attempts to be apprehended from the upper Danube, an expeditionary column, composed of two divisions of hussars and two pieces of artillery from the seventh army corps, was disposed along the Danube upward to the lower Gran.

While the main body approached Lévenecz, we learned that the former expeditionary column of the seventh army corps—which had surprised Colonel Almásy in Lossoncz, and immediately after this event had been charged to direct its expeditions toward the district of the northern mountain-towns and the Túrócz comitate—had in the mean time returned toward Eperjes, and been obliged, by a decree which had been sent to it from De-



breczin, to place itself at the disposal of Lieut.-general Dembinski, who had again been employed by Kossuth—namely, had been intrusted with the command of a new army corps formed in Kaschau.

The district of the mountain-towns being occupied by the enemy, and our main body seeming to be menaced thereby in its rear during its further movements from Lévenecz towards Komorn, a new expeditionary column, under the command, of my elder brother, the Honvéd Major Armin Görgei, was dispatched to dislodge the enemy from the mountain-towns, on the 16th of April, in the first instance against Schemnitz (Selmeczbánya).

Our main body, which, in consequence of similar detachings and the losses it had already sustained during the campaign, now amounted to scarcely more than 25,000 men, had arrived on the previous day at the river Gran, with the first corps at the height of Lévenecz at Szecse, with the third above this point at O-Bars, and with the two army divisions of the seventh corps below it at Zsem-lér. At each of these three points bridges had speedily to be thrown across the river.

The enemy, however, by way of precaution, had removed or destroyed the greater part of the materials fit for this purpose that had existed in the near environs; and the single ready-made scaffold-bridge which we carried with us scarcely reached half-way across the river, just then swollen to an unusual height.

Of the three places for crossing above mentioned, that at O-Bars seemed to offer most facilities for the construction of a bridge. We intended to let the third army corps, which had been disposed hither, cross first, in order to protect, by descending along the right bank, the passage to be effected further down between Szecse and Kálna by the first army corps, and at Zsem-lér by the two-thirds of the seventh corps.

For this purpose not only the ready-made scaffold-bridge, but also other chief requisites for bridge-building were placed at the disposal of the chief of the Hungarian pioneers, who was charged with the formation of a Bridge at O-Bars.

He proved himself, however, incompetent for the task assigned him; and in spite of all the circumstances favorable to the construction of the bridge at O-Bars, that between Kálna and Szecse was finished soonest, though not till the night between the 17th and 18th.

On the 17th of April a courier from Debreczin appeared at my head-quarters at Lévecz with the news that the Diet had accepted Kossuth's proposition, that, as an answer to the octroyed constitution of the 4th of March 1849, the dynasty of Habsburg-Lorraine be declared to have forfeited its hereditary right to the throne of Hungary; that the future form of government for Hungary, however, be an open question; and for the present that a provisional government be appointed.

However completely such a resolution on the part of the Diet corresponded with my national feelings—thanks to the manner in which the said dynasty had taken part against Hungary in the civil war, originally stirred up by the Croat Ban Baron Jellachich at his own instance—as it could nevertheless not find favor—which I had already by way of warning explained to the President Kossuth in Gödöllö—even before the tribunal of the most ordinary policy, much less before that of a rational love for one's country; so such a resolution was very far from being justified by the dynastic disposition of the old troops, and especially of the old officers of the army, on whom it is self-evident must devolve the task of procuring support for it, not only in the interior of Hungary, but also beyond it.

This resolution of the Diet moreover stood in direct contradiction to the declared conviction of Kossuth himself at Tiszafüred in the beginning of March, *that it was the most sacred duty of all who meant honorably by the country to venture on no step, the consequences of which might divide the nation into parties, and consequently only increase the power of the common enemy of all.* It stood in still more direct contradiction to what Kossuth had told me at the same time and place respecting the desire of the majority of the Diet for cowardly submission, the real existence of which was in fact betrayed by the tone of the letter addressed to Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz, on the subject of the Hungarian prisoners of war in the hostile army, which letter had been sent to Kossuth from Debreczin to Gödöllö, to be by him approved and forwarded to its destination.

In the face of these contradictions, as well as in the face of the remarkable silence with which in Gödöllö Kossuth had heard my objections against the expediency of an offensive step against Austria—without refuting them—and had made me believe that he had given up his *flagrant* idea of answering the octroyed con-

stitution in any other way than by a still more energetic continuance of the defensive war, I had to doubt, if not the genuineness of the unofficial verbal communications of the Debreczin courier, at all events that this resolution of the Diet was unchangeable; and was thereby induced to bid the courier—who was immediately hastening back to Debreczin—orally inform the gentlemen of the Government and the Diet that it was high time they ceased to be *cowardly in adversity, insolent in prosperity*.

To undertake any energetic step against the Government and the Diet—however urgently such a step seemed to be demanded, partly by the general exasperation which the news of that resolution of the Diet called forth in my head-quarters, partly as a consequence of my proclamation of Waizen—was altogether impossible, from the circumstance that, on the one hand, I was, with the main body of the army, above thirty (German) miles distant from Debreczin; on the other, that I was just then occupied with our most important strategic task, the relief of Komorn.

Yielding to what was unavoidable, I had rather chiefly to consider how most certainly to prevent the sudden dissolution of our army, the consequence mainly to be feared from that fatal political step.

Here, however, I frankly confess I was at my wits' end; and never should I have been able to exorcise again the spirit of division which Kossuth's political *non plus ultra* had conjured up in the ranks of the army, had not events come to my assistance in the hour of greatest need.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

OF the three bridges ordered to be thrown across the river Gran, only the middle one (between Kálna on the right, and Szece on the left bank) was practicable on the 18th of April; the lower one, at Zsemlér, was to be finished on the 19th; while the completion of the upper one, at O-Bars, threatened to take several days still.

The enemy had not yet shown himself on the right bank of



the Gran opposite us, but it was impossible he could delay much longer; and if he made his appearance before we had effected the passage, although only with the fourth part of our troops, it would be easy for him effectually to obstruct us, since the right bank commanded the whole extent of the river occupied by us, namely, on the middle and lower point of the passage.

We therefore, in the course of the 18th, made use of the only bridge that was ready, between Kálna and Szece, for occupying the right bank of the Gran, not only with the first corps (Klapka), but also with the third (Damjanics), which had meanwhile been ordered from O-Bars down to Szece, and proceeded directly down the river toward Nagy-Sarló, to protect the passage across the Gran, which the two-thirds of the seventh corps had to effect at Zsemlér on the following day; while the Klapka corps was for the present charged with observing the main road toward Neutra (Nyitra), and the carriage road toward Surány.

Early in the forenoon of the 19th of April a brisk thunder of artillery suddenly resounded from the southwest, from the right bank of the Gran, to Lévenecz. It was the commencement of the battle of Nagy-Sarló.

The third army corps was to continue its march on this day, flanked on its right by the first, on the shortest line toward Komorn; the two-thirds of the seventh corps, after they should have crossed the river at Zsemlér, were to advance on the main road toward Gran (Esztergom)—if I am not mistaken—as far as Damásd, in order to protect the third corps on its left flank against a hostile attack; the head-quarters, however, were to be transferred to one of the nearest places north of Nagy-Sarló.

Now this conflict made it questionable whether our whole body should advance; because, with our utter want of information as to the strength of the enemy, its consequences could not be foreseen; and it appeared therefore more judicious to let the head-quarters abide in Lévenecz till the battle should be decided.

I myself remained also in Lévenecz, though, when the first thunder of artillery was heard, I was about to ride to Zsemlér, in order to expedite as much as possible the completion of the bridge there, and the passage of the two-thirds of the seventh army corps.

I intended personally to assist in the conduct of the battle, but only if it should take a decidedly unfavorable turn; and in order

in such case to be immediately at hand, I could not leave the head-quarters ; besides, from the elevated ruins of the old castle at Lévenecz the progress of the contest could be unobstructedly observed better than from any nearer point.

All the confusion which might have arisen from supposing me to be present in the station of the head-quarters, which had been appointed on the right bank of the Gran for this day, was obviated by my sending thither several orderly officers. These officers were to forward to Lévenecz all the reports which should arrive for me at this place. In like manner other orderly officers were stationed at Zsemlér, with directions to keep me constantly acquainted with the progress of the bridge constructing there.

Finally, the bridge at Kálna was also manned with a strong section of the head-quarter troops, in order to stop and collect the fugitives of our two corps engaged in the combat, in case they should come there with the intention of fleeing back to the left bank of the Gran.

But on this day we had no runaways in our ranks ; the enemy, on the contrary, had the more of that article.

In spite, however, of all the arrangements I had made for obtaining the speediest information of the progressive state of affairs on the battle-field, as well as respecting the construction of the bridge at Zsemlér, it was only late in the night between the 19th and 20th of April that I learned from the written report of General Damjanics, that he had put the enemy to flight.

At the same time a convoy of the severely wounded of the seventh corps arrived from the battle-field by Zsemlér at Lévenecz ; whereby I was assured of the completion and practicability of the temporary bridge across the Gran at Zsemlér, as well as of the possibility of hastening after our main body by a much shorter route than that by Kálna.

Leaving Lévenecz without further delay, I reached Zsemlér during the same night ; but on account of the extreme darkness could not till the morning of the 20th overtake the army corps under Damjanics and Klapka, which, on the preceding evening, had already advanced beyond Cseke toward Komorn, in pursuit of the enemy.

Contrary to all expectation, I found Damjanics again violently excited against Klapka and the commanders of his cavalry. He accused the former of intending, at the very beginning of the

battle, once more to betake himself to a hasty and disorderly retreat; the latter, of being incapable of being urged to any attack whatever, and of having done literally nothing during the action.

According to the details obtained from other sources, the commanders of General Damjanics' cavalry—so far as I can remember—seemed indeed to deserve in the fullest degree the reproach cast on them: General Klapka, however, less. It is true, that he had asserted at first that the enemy opposed to him was his superior in numbers; and on this account had repeatedly urgently demanded to be reinforced from the third army corps. But when his request had been most promptly acceded to on the part of General Damjanics, he held out firmly, and essentially contributed to the decisive result of the day; the honor of which is certainly mainly due to General Damjanics, on the ground that he, as my substitute on the field of battle, had remained unshaken, in spite of the dubious behavior of Klapka at the outset.

The battle at Nagy-Sarló (on the 19th of April, 1849), was the consequence—unexpected by the enemy—of our having crossed the river Gran, the day before, on the 18th, with the first and third army corps, between Kálna and Szecse, and of the enemy's concentric offensive movement, from the west (out of the valley of the Neutra), and south (from the point where the Gran empties itself into the Danube), commenced against us simultaneously—consequently, in any case, too late—with the intention of preventing our crossing the river.

The following two facts clearly prove that the hostile commander had not been prepared for encountering two-thirds of our main body on the right bank of the river Gran. (On account of the late passage across the Gran at Zsemlér of the seventh army corps, only a part of its cavalry, under Pöltenberg's personal command, could take part in the action, near its close.)

1. His troops dispersed in disorder, after they had once begun to give way, in the most diverging directions toward the west.

2. Not till a long time after the commencement of this *débandade en gros* did hostile columns, marching upward along the Gran, emerge from the south before our extreme left wing, which, moving downward along the Gran, turned them on the right, and forced them now likewise to flee in a western direction.



The first of these facts justifies the supposition, that no definite line of retreat had been marked out, by way of precaution, to the hostile troops. This, however, is omitted—immediately before an *expected* conflict—only when a leader is beside himself from absolute confidence of victory; and to suppose such a moral condition in the Austrian generals serving in Hungary, after the days of Szolnok, Hatvan, Tápió-Bicske, Isaszeg, and Waizen, is, I should say, somewhat too difficult.

In accordance with the first fact, the second also indicates that the hostile general, on the 18th of April, supposed that the greatest part of our main body was still on the other side the Gran, and consequently that he was prepared on the 19th for any thing rather than for a decisive conflict; for, on the contrary supposition, he must have taken care especially of the arrival in good time of his forces on the battle-field.

These two facts undeniably justify the supposition, that the Austrians were completely taken by surprise on the 19th of April by the Hungarian army corps of Damjanics and Klapka (at that time amounting together to 16,000 men); for should it be denied that they were *surprised*, then the Austrian offensive, wrecked on that day, would, both in its plan and execution, sink utterly below the level of criticism.

On the 20th Damjanics and Klapka continued their march toward Komorn as far as Jászfalu; but the two-thirds of the seventh army corps descended along the river Gran toward the Danube, encountered at Kémend a strong hostile column, attacked it without delay, and obliged it to retreat over the pontoon across the Gran to the right bank of the Danube.

In this contest the expeditionary column of the seventh army corps, which had been already dispatched from Waizen toward the lower Gran, partly co-operated; for being on the left bank of the Gran, and flanking the enemy, who was retreating along the opposite bank of the river, it directed against him the fire of both its guns, almost without intermission.

This expeditionary column was to have crossed the Gran after the battle at Kémend, and rejoined the main body of the seventh army corps. The bridge at Kémend was not, however, completed, and the column was consequently obliged to march as far as Zsemlér, that it might there at last gain the right bank of the Gran.

Of the enemy defeated on the previous day at Nagy-Sarló only some scattered groups showed themselves on this side the little river Neutra, who preferred being made prisoners to wandering about longer without aim.

We had accordingly up to Komorn no longer to fear any resistance in masses. The nearer our main body approached it, however, the more our still indispensable line of communication by Lévenecz with the left bank of the Theiss appeared to be exposed to such hostile attempts as were practicable from the northwest and southeast. The protection toward the southeast remained with the two-thirds of the seventh army corps—located for this purpose at Kémend, and afterward at Köbölkut—until the Kmety army division, which had been ordered from Waizen up the Danube to Párkány, should have arrived there; while for protection toward the northeast, that expeditionary column, which, after the battle at Kémend, was obliged to march as far as Zsemlér to gain the right bank of the Gran, after having effected its passage, had to make reaching Verebély the object of its next isolated service. The present securing of our communication with Lévenecz toward the northwest, however, was effected in the mean time by two divisions of hussars, who started during the night between the 20th and 21st of April from Jászfalu toward Verebély.

General Guyon, since his nomination to the command of the fortress of Komorn, had several times unsuccessfully attempted to reach the fortress unobserved through the hostile surrounding line, and had thereupon retreated again within the circuit of the operations of our main body. In Jászfalu he resolved upon a renewed and forcible attempt to enter Komorn in spite of the hostile surrounding troops, and requested a squadron of hussars for this purpose. He broke through the hostile line on the 21st of April, and surprised the garrison, now very low-spirited, with the reanimating intelligence of the unexpected relief near at hand.

On the 22d this relief was effected on the left bank of the Danube. The Damjanics and Klapka army corps bivouacked before the Waag tête-de-pont of the fortress of Komorn.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

THE fortress of Komorn is known to lie on the left bank of the Danube, and to reach with only one of its outworks, the so-called fort or tête-de-pont of that river, across to its right bank.

The garrison, whose firmness during the siege deserves in general the most honorable mention, had fortunately maintained this important outwork, in spite of repeated vigorous bombardments, and thereby secured to us the possibility of throwing a bridge across the Danube between it and the fortress, and thus of effecting deliverance on the right bank also in a very short time.

At the same place a bridge of boats had been thrown across some weeks before, but within a few days had been sunk by the enemy's batteries on the right bank.

To avert the recurrence of such a result, we had recourse to *solid* swimming supports instead of hollow ones, that is, we tried our fortune with a floating-bridge.

Taking into consideration the efforts of the hostile batteries to hinder the formation of the bridge, together with the circumstance that we found not the least thing prepared for such an undertaking, in consequence of the erroneous views prevailing generally in the fortress of Komorn, as well as in the town, *that to bridge over the Danube by means of rafts was impracticable*; we might certainly be well content to be able to open the offensive against the hostile blockading corps on the right bank of the Danube on the fourth day after the arrival of our main body within the range of the fortification.

This offensive was to begin with a nocturnal surprise on the hostile trenches.

Between the proper inner fortress of Komorn and its western outworks—the so-called Palatinal line—is situated the town of Komorn, with its southern rows of houses only a few steps distant from the bank of the stream.

Directly in front of the town, on the right bank of the Danube



—therefore west of the fort—lay the village of Uj-Szőny, at that time, in consequence of the siege, only a scene of conflagration. Westward (up the river) of it, the right bank of the Danube rises to a height, from which the opposite outwork (the Palatinal line), nay even the principal rampart of the fortress, are commanded ; the latter wall, however, only within the widest range of the largest calibre. This commanding point is known in German by the name of “ Sandberg;” in Hungarian of “ Monostor.”

In the autumn of 1848 the Hungarian government had the then prosperous village of Uj-Szőny surrounded on the west, south, and southeast with earth-works, in form of a large curve, and reaching from the Monostor as far as the Danube fort. The extensive space between it and the river was to serve as an entrenched camp ; but the country at the time of the victorious invasion of Prince Windischgrätz was still without an army for this camp, and the fortress of Komorn was destitute of the forces necessary for the occupation and maintenance of its gigantic line of defense.

The besieger could consequently take possession of the abandoned earth-works without drawing a sword, and partly appropriate them to his own purposes. He had cut his trenches along the main road from Raab to Ofen, which, parallel with the bank of the stream, crosses the fortified camp, and had planted his batteries, so formidable to the fortress, on the Monostor and south of the Danube fort ; against these we directed the sudden attack by which we opened our offensive designed for the complete deliverance of the fortress.

In the night between the 25th and 26th of April, about 4000 infantry, composed of the best troops of the Damjanics and Klapka army corps, under the command of Colonel Knézich, crossed the just-finished floating-bridge. One half of the column took for the object of its attack the small market-town O-Szőny, east of the Danube fort ; the other the hostile battery lying south of it.

Both points were in our hands by daybreak of the 26th of April ; as was also the equipment of the battery, already reduced to four 24-pounders and two 18-pounders, together with its guard, consisting of about 200 men, who laid down their arms without further resistance.

In the same night, far above the Palatinal line, two battalions

of the fortress troops crossed the Danube in boats, for the purpose of executing simultaneously a brisk tirailleur attack on the batteries posted on the Monostor. By this we intended to attract the enemy's attention thither, that the attack with the bayonet on the hostile battery erected to the south of the Danube fort might be more certainly successful. The commander of the two battalions from the fortress, however, was not equal to his task: the attack of tirailleurs on the Monostor did not take place; but the enterprise against O-Szöny and the batteries to the south of the Danube fort nevertheless completely succeeded.

As soon as the news arrived, the Damjanics and Klapka army corps, which had remained during the nightly expedition of Colonel Knézich on the left bank, commenced in their turn the passage over the floating-bridge to the right bank of the Danube.

Two or three days before, the Kmety division—as is known, sent from Waizen to Párkány—had reached the latter place, and the other two-thirds of the seventh army corps, which had remained behind in Köbölkut (at that time under the temporary command of Colonel Pöltenberg), were to join immediately the Damjanics and Klapka army corps in Komorn; when suddenly there arrived intelligence of a hostile advance from Szered toward Neuhäusel (Ersek-Ujvár), which caused the detaching of Pöltenberg to Perbete and Bajcs, for the protection of our line of communication with Lévenecz: this was so much the more necessary as we were daily expecting an additional supply of ammunition by that route.

The favorable result of the surprise by night, however, suggested as our next enterprise, to transport as speedily as possible a stronger force to the right bank of the Danube; and while the Damjanics and Klapka army corps had to pass over the floating-bridge, a courier hastened to Perbete to inform Pöltenberg that he must reach Komorn with his troops without loss of time, and immediately follow these two army corps to the right bank of the Danube.

Meantime that half of our troops for the surprise which had been sent against the hostile battery situated to the south of the Danube fort, after taking it by storm, had turned eastward against the other earth-works, which were disposed in a large curve extending to the Monostor, and had captured those nearest to them one after another at the first assault. But the far-extended,

isolated advance of this column of infantry, scarcely 2000 men strong, exposed it to the most dangerous assault on the part of the main force of the hostile besieging troops of all the three arms, before the right bank of the Danube was attained by the first sections of *our* main body.

Notwithstanding the solidity of the floating-bridge, it could not be made use of without such an amount of precaution as caused considerable delay; between the end of the bridge and the point on which these 2000 men of our troops of surprise were engaged in unequal combat against the three combined arms of the enemy, there existed an obstacle insurmountable for cavalry and artillery—the trench, the lowering of which at intervals occasioned another loss of time; and in this way more than an hour had already elapsed since the commencement of the attack of the hostile artillery against our isolated weak section of infantry, before the first half-battery of the Damjanics corps could at last take part in the conflict.

During the following action Klapka had to command our left wing (toward O-Szőny and Mocsá), Damjanics the centre (toward Pusztá-Csém and Pusztá-Herkály), while I undertook the conduct of the combat on the right wing toward Acs.

The contest between the troops of surprise and the besieging army lay in the range of General Damjanics (in our centre). Thither the troops debouching by degrees on the right bank were first of all directed. We could not, however, by any means confine ourselves exclusively to strengthening our centre, because it remained nevertheless for a long time exposed to the danger of being overpowered—on the one hand, on account of the great superiority of the hostile forces already concentrated against it; on the other, from the slow arrival of our reinforcements by the floating-bridge; and because, if it should be overpowered, which was easily possible, we should lose our sole point of support, except the Danube fort, on the right bank, without having gained in the meantime a new one.

A new point of support, however, and one indeed most important for us—the Monostor—seemed just then to be neglected by the enemy, and while the centre still held out, the more easily to be gained by us, as I supposed for certain, that the two battalions of the fortress, who were to keep up a distracting tirailleur attack against the Monostor, to favor the nightly surprise, but



who had failed in doing so, would now—several hours after the time fixed—at least have arrived on the spot.

I accordingly interrupted for a time the concourse of troops proceeding from the outlet of the floating-bridge toward the centre, in order to turn off a half-battery, with a half-squadron of hussars for its protection, by themselves toward the Monostor. They found it already abandoned by the enemy, although the two battalions of the fortress had not yet appeared.

However enigmatical the—apparently voluntary—evacuation of the Monostor may seem, our surprise at the enemy's thus exposing himself did not prevent us from improving it as conscientiously as possible. The half-battery, with its slender protection of cavalry—although all that our right wing possessed—advanced immediately over the Monostor and along the main road toward Acs.

The object of this advance was evidently to divert a part of the hostile forces which were still acting with numerical superiority against our centre. Whether, and how far, this object was attained, I could, however, not perceive with my own eyes on account of the distance between our centre and the right wing. I only saw that my half-battery, during its isolated advance, was threatened by superior forces in its right flank as well as in front, and that it ran the risk of being separated from the centre and destroyed, unless the earth-works situated between the centre and the Monostor, but nearest to the latter, were speedily manned with infantry.

Without delay I employed for this purpose two battalions of the Klapka corps, which were just passing over the floating-bridge; for our left wing, under Klapka, was at that time the least menaced.

The far-advanced half-battery withdrew again in the meantime toward the Monostor.

At the same time the adversary seemed to have recognized—too late, however—the importance of the Monostor to him; at least this was indicated by the resolution with which the hostile left wing exchanged its hitherto passive demeanor for the offensive, in order to dispute with us the possession of the Monostor.

The reader is aware, from what precedes, that by the appellation "Monostor" is here meant the most commanding point of the right bank of the Danube above Uj-Szőny; at the same time,

the point on which the fortified camp leans to the west. From this point the undulating ground descends toward the west (up the stream), and is covered, to the extent of about double gun-range,\* only by vineyards and isolated fruit-trees. Where these end, the wood begins, known to me only by the name "Forest of Acs," which extends along the bank of the Danube, up the stream, as far as the brook Czonzó. The width of this forest gradually increases from the vineyards. At the distance of three or four gun-ranges from the Monostor, however, a large piece of forest branches off from the wood on the river-bank, about one or two gun-ranges in a southern direction toward Pusztá-Herkály. This piece of forest is crossed near its southern limit by the main road from Raab. Between its eastern edge and the fortified camp the ground is free and open, as well as between its western edge and the brook Czonzó. Beyond the brook, on its left bank, lies the village of Acs, through which leads the main road from Raab.

This southern piece of forest, together with the whole forest on the river-bank adjoining it, as far as the vineyards of the Monostor, were in the possession of the enemy, and their line of retreat toward Acs was hereby completely secured. If we intended seriously to endanger this, we must evidently first drive him further into the forest of Acs, at least as far as beyond the southern piece of the forest. My original attempt, to advance with a half-battery along the main road to Acs, without regard to the forest on the river-bank flanked by it, could be successful only as a feint. However, the resolute offensive, which the hostile left wing had now suddenly assumed, proved that the adversary had already sufficiently recovered from his first surprise—to the consequences of which we were probably indebted for the very welcome evacuation of the Monostor—no longer to allow himself to be imposed upon by mere firing with blank-cartridges.

While the artillery and cavalry of the hostile left wing pressed on—at an equal height with the eastern end (turned toward us) of the forest on the river bank—after our half-battery on its re-

\* By "gun-range," where this expression occurs in the present work without the addition of a defined calibre, is always meant the distance at which, in hostile encounters in the open field, batteries of six-pounders are most frequently used. This distance generally varies from 800 to 1000 paces.

treat toward the Monostor along the main road, a swarm of tirailleurs rushed out from this eastern part of the forest toward the vineyards of the Monostor, which on our part was occupied only by two companies of the seventeenth Honvéd battalion. These sufficed, it is true, to maintain the vineyards, but not for a successful counter-attack, which I intended. Consequently two other companies of the same battalion were ordered forward; this was one of the two battalions which I had sent from the Klapka corps on to the Monostor, to compensate for the still-missing battalions of the fortress.

The brisk shrapnell-fire of these hostile divisions of artillery, which had closely followed our retreating battery on the open ground bordering upon the south of the Monostor, rendered this attack difficult. It nevertheless succeeded; and soon after the four companies of the seventeenth Honvéd battalion had established themselves in the forest on the river-bank.

At the same time there arrived at the Monostor from our left wing, as a re-inforcement to our right, the first regiment of hussars (Kaiser), besides a half-battery. The battalions of the fortress which had been in vain expected for a long time, also arrived at last. The forces at my disposal consisted consequently of four Honvéd battalions, eight squadrons of hussars, and eight guns. With these I believed I could now the more confidently assume the offensive against the hostile left wing in the forest, as well as in the open ground contiguous to the south, because Damjanics had already vigorously repulsed the attacks on our centre, nay was even acting on the offensive, so that the earth-works next the Monostor no longer needed to be defended by troops.

As the principal object of attack for the right wing I chose the above-indicated piece of forest, which extends from the forest on the river-bank in a southern direction toward Pusztá-Herkály beyond the main road. I intended to attack it simultaneously from both ends; in the south, its point, with the two battalions from the fortress; in the north, its basis (where it joins the forest on the river-bank), with the seventeenth battalion; while the other battalion of the Klapka corps had to remain in reserve. Of course the hostile forces of artillery and cavalry, developed on the open ground *à cheval* of the main road, had previously to be completely dislodged.



Occupied with the accomplishment of this task, I had already advanced nearly to gun-range distance of the piece of forest, when I was overtaken by a written report from General Damjanics, to this effect: "The enemy has been reinforced. Nagy-Sándor with the main body of the cavalry has been overthrown. Klapka is retreating toward the fort of the Danube. If the right wing advances further, I am no longer able to protect it from being turned on the left, without exposing my own left."

These news obliged me to interrupt my advance; nay, I immediately sent back the battalion of the reserve to the Monostor, that it might meanwhile again occupy the earth-works situated nearest to this point.

I wrote to Damjanics, that he, like myself, should give way, even to a superior force, only tardily; and if it came to the worst, maintain at any rate the earth-works of the fortified camp lying within his range.

The hostile left wing also seemed to have received meanwhile considerable reinforcements; for it now suddenly resumed, with superior force of artillery, the combat which had already ceased on its part; while of my eight guns, after a short reply to the hostile cannonade, six pieces were silent from want of ammunition. The chests, which had been sent for the purpose of bringing us fresh supplies of ammunition, had all been returned to us empty. Only two guns had still some powder and ball remaining. The fire of these, however, had to be reserved for the possible case, that the enemy might intend to make a more energetic attempt than formerly to reconquer the Monostor.

I consequently withdrew all the eight guns from the combat, and sent them back to the Monostor. The commander of the first regiment of hussars had perhaps conceived this to be the desired signal for a general retreat, as he used the utmost speed in reaching the Monostor with his regiment, and even outstript the guns. The two battalions of the fortress would have followed the example of the hussars: fortunately, however, I perceived this intention time enough to prevent it.

I had both the battalions of the fortress marched up *en front* opposite the hostile cannonade, and forced them to stand it without flinching. By this open display, as it were, of contempt of death, I intended beforehand to make the success of storming our position on the Monostor appear doubtful to the enemy. I

had great difficulty in this matter with the troops, who were accustomed to the protecting breast-works of the ramparts of the fortress; still more, however, with the staff-officer who commanded these battalions. And after all, the attempt to impose upon the enemy by a passive resistance, turned out to be superfluous; because, notwithstanding the vehemence of his renewed attack, he had no intention whatever of assuming the offensive; since, had he purposed the reconquest of the fortified camp, he could not have forborne a simultaneous advance in the forest along the bank of the Danube against the Monostor; but no such advance was attempted.

As soon as I discovered this circumstance—not, it is true, till the battalions of the fortress had sensibly suffered—I released them from their painful situation, allowing them to retire by degrees out of the reach of the fire of the artillery.

By this means the foremost line of battle of our right wing reached the same height with that of the centre under Damjanics, who, although stopping his advance, in consequence of Nagy-Sándor's flight and Klapka's retreat at the commencement, had, nevertheless, firmly maintained himself on the ground he had already gained.

By our giving up the offensive, the day's battle came to an end early in the afternoon. An unconcerted armistice took place.

The enemy, satisfied that he was no longer menaced by us, wholly desisted from further attacks on our position in front of the fortified camp; while the two army corps under Damjanics and Klapka were condemned to an equal inactivity from the want of ammunition, which had already been generally felt; and the two-thirds of the seventh army corps, hastening hither from Perbete, and having still a pretty good supply of ammunition, did not make its appearance on the right bank of the Danube, on account of its great distance from Komorn, until night had set in, namely, long after the enemy had effected his retreat from the field of battle.

The day, however, remained ours; for we had taken the fortified camp together with the enemy's trench, the equipment of a besieging battery, and considerable stores of pioneers' tools and projectiles—nay, even the tents of the hostile camp; and had completely delivered the fortress: while the enemy, far from disputing with us the possession of all this, contented himself with

the hurried protection of his retreat from the field of battle by Raab to Wieselburg ; in which, indeed, the greatest service was rendered to him by the scarcity of ammunition on the part of the artillery of both the army corps (Damjanics and Klapka) engaged in this day's action, which prevented them from attacking him, as well as by the too late arrival of Pöltenberg on the field of battle.

With the complete deliverance of Komorn, the execution of the plan of operations projected in Gödöllő—after the battle of Isaszeg—by our chief of the general staff had satisfactorily succeeded ; thanks to the unshaken firmness of General Damjanics during the battle of Nagy-Sarló, as well as to the admirable perseverance and rare masterly skill with which General Aulich knew how so long to fetter the Austrian principal army concentrated before Pesth, and to deceive it as to our real strategic intentions, until the subsequent perception of them appeared to be only the more calculated to lead our bewildered adversary to his disgraceful defeat at Nagy-Sarló.

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

WHEN, on the 17th of April 1849, the news of the resolution adopted three days before by the Diet reached my head-quarters at Lévenecz, and all the officers of my suite who happened to be present immediately expressed the most undisguised indignation at this resolution ; when, on the following day, the officers of the seventh army corps called upon me for the fulfillment of the second point especially in the concluding declaration of my proclamation from Waizen, and moreover informed me beforehand, that the whole seventh army corps intended to do the same officially on the first opportunity ; while at the same time a disposition nothing less than unfavorable to the new law seemed to prevail among the army corps under Damjanics and Klapka ;—I had seriously to apprehend that the army was near its dissolution.

The peculiar conjunctures of the moment\* obliged me to resolve, in the last extremity—that is, if the seventh army corps should

\* See Chapter xliv.



insist on my acting in a determined manner, in accordance with my proclamation of Waizen against the decision of the 14th of April—to summon the staff-officers of the army, and likewise deputies from the corps of subaltern officers belonging to all bodies of troops, to assemble for consultation, and set down the declaration of the majority of the assembly as a compromise between the parties of different opinions existing in the army.

The danger of such a step, in the face of the conflicts with the enemy to be expected ; the excitement of the passions during the discussion ; the depressingly vivid exhibition—unavoidable on the occasion—of the pernicious consequences to Hungary of the 14th of April ; the participation in our further contests of probably scarcely half of those who, through the admitted difference of opinion for and against the law of the 14th of April—whatever the decision of the majority—would otherwise be forced to fight against their conviction ;—all these undeniable consequences of this desperate resolve proved to me clearly enough that, as I could nevertheless discover no better means, my sagacity was here nonplused.

In the conclusion of the chapter in which the 14th of April was mentioned here for the first time, I was obliged, anticipating the chronological order of these records, already to acknowledge, that while in this perplexed condition, *events came to my assistance* : and such was really the case.

The seventh army corps—accidentally not united—*before* the battle of Nagy-Sarló could come to no decision upon the intended demonstration against the law of the 14th of April. *After* this battle, the operations on our part, which had been interrupted for several days by the tardy construction of the bridge across the river Gran, had again reached that point of offensive development, when they completely absorbed at the same time both the physical and mental activity of the soldier ; and while the known success of these operations—the defeat of the enemy at Nagy-Sarló on the 19th, his retreat from the battle-field at Kémend over the Danube on the 20th, the partial deliverance of Komorn on the 22d, its complete relief on the 26th of April, and finally the general retreat of the Austrian army toward the frontiers of the country—satisfied *alike* the *adversaries* and the *non-adversaries* of the 14th of April ; the *former* by this very success were strengthened in their idea, *first of all to expel completely out of*

*the country the* EXTERNAL *enemies to the Hungarian constitution of 1848, in order afterward to get rid more easily of its* INTERNAL *foes, and thus to restore that constitution, the overthrow of which was the point where the political extremes of the Hungary of that day met.*

Confidence in the possibility of realizing this idea, however, in spite of the late victories, by which it had been raised, dissolved into pure enthusiasm before a single *calm* glance of the soldier at the recent past, the present, and the near future.

The Hungarian arms in the space of four weeks had, it is true, performed such unwonted exploits, as to have prophesied would have been to succeed in rivaling Kossuth's most high-flown proclamations. With our armed forces, however, small in proportion to those of the enemy, I could by no means conceal from myself, that these exploits were the extreme which Hungary had to expect from her army with its then degree of military training.

We were unfortunately obliged to admit, according to my own experience in the field, that it was not, perhaps, a high degree of valor pervading the "young army," which had nailed victory to our colors. Nay, we were forced to acknowledge—however powerfully self-love strove against it—that a considerable part of the thanks of the nation for the speedy and happy termination of the just-described April campaign, was due at bottom to Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz and the Ban Baron Jellachich.

We had gained bloody victories. This, indeed, no bulletins could nullify, even with the best intentions on the part of the enemy; but the palm of most of these victories was constantly due only to a small part of our army, almost always to one and the same part. In *it* the young original Honvéd soldiers were indeed strongly represented, but still disproportionately less so than the old soldiers, the regular ones, as they were called—the former constituent parts of the very army opposed to us. This portion of our force—as no reliance whatever could be placed on the remainder, the greater part by far—could never at any time be spared; it bore the brunt in every engagement; the majority of the losses by which we had to purchase every advantage on the field of battle had constantly fallen upon the ranks of our best troops—those who could not be replaced.

And the rest were very far from having gained, during the course of the campaign, so much in discipline and valor as to

make up in a moral point of view for our losses. The strict military discipline, which, assisted by the older officers, I had been endeavoring to introduce, and not altogether without success, into the corps d'armée of the upper Danube—now the seventh army corps—met with little sympathy from the commanders of the other corps, Aulich excepted. As the temporary substitute of the commander-in-chief, Field-marshal Lieut. Vetter, however, I had not in fact sufficient power to keep my comrades energetically to equal efforts.

The greater part of the hopeful young army could not always as yet be supplied with provisions for more than one day in advance; consequently the uninterrupted resolute pursuit of the beaten enemy was never possible; but without such a pursuit there can be no complete defeat, and without it no favorable termination to a war, which, like that between Hungary and Austria, especially after the 14th of April 1849, could end only with the complete defeat of the one or the other armed force.

Moreover, the camp of the most of the army corps literally swarmed with the vehicles of officers, non-commissioned officers, and sutlers, without reckoning the wagons necessary for the transport of the daily supplies. This barricade of wagons, inseparable from the army, and extremely obstructive to its swift, continuous advance, already rendered an accidentally called-for flank movement a problem difficult of solution, and any thought on the part of the general of the possible necessity for a retreat was enough to make one's hair stand on end.

In order accordingly to nail victory lastingly to the Hungarian tricolor banner in this state of discipline of the majority of our troops, *either* the army must be augmented to such an extent, that numerically superior forces, under the command of skillful leaders, could be opposed to the enemy on all points on which the country was menaced by him; *or* the leaders of the Hungarian army, in general inferior to the enemy in number, discipline, and valor, must remain superior to the hostile generals, taking one with another, in the amount of the fortune-of-war or of talent to such a degree as had hitherto been the case.

To satisfy the first demand of this alternative was simply impossible; for, however willingly the country might have furnished the number of recruits necessary for the formation of new battalions, the means of equipping them, according to the exigencies



of the modern system of warfare, were wanting. And the idea of raising the army to the desired strength with *scythe-bearers*, or perhaps even with *Amazons*, may perhaps do well enough as clap-trap in high-sounding debates about the invincibleness of this or that nation; but the lips of an experienced soldier, to whom the esteem of his companions in arms is still of some importance, can not speak of it without irony!

The second demand of the preceding alternative could only be addressed to that firm in which "pious wishes" are realized.

It is true the history of war names gifted generals who knew how to secure victory in spite of the inferior number of their troops; but nowhere do we find definite measures and formulas given, by the use of which it would be possible to discover beforehand—to pass over the fortune-of-war in silence—first, the strategic genius of an individual, then the *maximum* of the relative *minus* in the number of troops which would be compensated for by a certain quantity of genius in the general. Nay, even assuming that such measures and formulas were indicated by the art of war, and that we had the ability to make the best possible use of them, we might, it is true, have been spared many a sad mistake in the choice of our own commanders of troops; but to preserve unchanged the favorable proportion in which the leaders of our armies have hitherto appeared to be superior to the hostile generals in fortune-of-war or talent would nevertheless have *no longer* been in our power, *after* the chief command of the hostile army had been transferred from Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz to the Master of the Ordnance Baron Welden. For although the latter's renown, in the light in which it had then penetrated to our ranks, appertained rather to the author than to the general, the woeful change in the condition of the Austrian army from December, 1848, to April, 1849, had fully convinced us, that an appointment to the hostile chief command more favorable to us than that of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz was almost impossible—an equally favorable one in the highest degree improbable.

Our situation, after this change in the hostile chief command, in spite of our late victories, threatened consequently to become at all events more critical than it had previously been, altogether independently of the fateful consequences of the 14th of April to us.

If, moreover, I took these also fully into consideration, I could not fail to perceive that—with the probability of seeing the hos-

tile forces opposed to us soon augmented to an overwhelming superiority—it was indeed quite indifferent whether Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz or any other stood at the head of the hostile army. The change in the Austrian chief command, by the side of the inauspicious declarations of the Austrian soldiers who had been made prisoners on the 26th of April, sank to a subordinate circumstance, insignificant as regarded the question of the existence of Hungary.

For these prisoners of war related, that their officers had consoled them for the repeated retreats with the assurance that a Russian army was already about marching against us, and that the Austrian forces were retreating only in order to await the entrance of the former into Hungary.

These declarations were indeed derided by our optimists, as flying rumors. Nay, even to myself they came unexpectedly; for I had supposed that the Austrian Government, as it seemed now to be necessary to make an unusual sacrifice for the salvation of the monarchy, would, for reasons which it is superfluous to enumerate, decide rather on the evacuation of Italy than on the acceptance of foreign aid. The *unlooked-for nature* of these declarations, however, could scarcely weaken their credibility in the eyes of those who were unprejudiced enough to consider, that the hostile officers, even from jealousy of the victorious reputation of their own army, would have hesitated to console their bewildered inferiors with the prospect of the assistance of a foreign army, if the same consolation had not been given to them by their generals, and to these by the ministers in Vienna.

I no longer doubted for a moment that the Emperor of Russia would interfere with Hungary.

Hereupon our optimists again thought, that in such a case England, France, Sardinia, North America, all Germany, Turkey, &c., would immediately declare war against the Emperor of Russia. But however plausible this view had been *before* the 14th of April, *after* that day its surprisingly quick propagation seemed to me to be only a lamentable proof how largely a certain epidemic of political eccentricity prevailed in my country. Moreover, it must be quite indifferent to the defender of any cause which falls in consequence of the hostile intervention of a third party, whether the *right* of this third one to interfere is or is not afterward disputed by a fourth or fifth.

The Debreczin lawgivers of the 14th of April had with the Russian intervention immediately raised the ghost of the last hours of the country; but were not in possession of the right magic formula to lay it again. They could not compensate for this by all their optimist oracular apothegms; could not charm away the gaping wounds, of which I mentally saw that my fatherland was bleeding to death; could not deceive the calm glance, before which, as has been said, confidence in the possible realization of the idea of again restoring the constitution of the country, in defiance of its external as well as internal enemies—namely, those Debreczin lawgivers—melted away as mere enthusiasm.

The facts, the consideration of which led to this sorrowful result, lay open to the glance of every soldier in our main army—they were generally known. From them any one might deduce the same inference, before which my belief in the possibility of saving Hungary from the "*blessings of the octroyed constitution*" had already melted into thin air. For this no peculiar sagacity was necessary. A mind uninfatuated and a vision unobstructed were quite sufficient.

And the blind belief—which could not withstand that inference; which alone kept the army still together; in which alone the old constitutional soldiers, in spite of their hostile feeling against the lawgivers of the 14th of April, were united with the friends of the latter in the struggle against the army of the octroyed constitution—was consequently a very uncertain means of unison for the parts of the Hungarian army opposed to each other in their political opinions. The same troops which the contest against Austria united to-day might to-morrow employ their arms against each other. The most dangerous enemy of the Hungarian army did *not* stand *in front of it*, he lurked—thanks to the 14th of April, which had aroused him—in their own ranks; it was *the spirit of discord*, silenced for the present, but by no means banished forever, by a not less dangerous enemy, *the spirit of arrogance*.

To cajole the former—for I distrusted my power of successfully combating it openly—to destroy the latter, on the contrary, at one stroke, I saw was my next task, if I had still the energetic prosecution of the war against Austria seriously at heart, which, notwithstanding the 14th of April, was really the case.



I attempted to accomplish this by a proclamation, the original sketch of which, in Hungarian, I happen still to possess. I here give it in the German translation.

“KOMORN, 29th April, 1849.

“COMPANIONS IN ARMS!

“A month has scarcely elapsed since we stood on the other side of the Theiss, casting a doubtful glance into our doubtful future.

“Who would then have believed that a month later we should have already crossed the Danube, and have delivered the greater part of our fair country from the yoke of a perfidious dynasty?

“The boldest among us had not dared confidently to expect so much.

“But the noble feeling of patriotism had inspired you; and in your courage the enemy beheld—numberless legions.

“You have been victorious—victorious seven times in uninterrupted succession—and you must continue to conquer.

“Think of this when you again encounter the enemy.

“Every battle we fought was decisive; more decisive still will be every one we have yet to fight.

“On you has devolved the happiness, by the sacrifice of your lives, of securing to Hungary her ancient independence, her nationality, her freedom, and her permanent existence. Such your most glorious, holiest mission.

“Think of this when you again encounter the enemy.

“Many of us imagine the wished-for future to be already won. Do not deceive yourselves! This combat—not Hungary alone against Austria—Europe will fight, for the natural, most sacred rights of peoples against usurping tyranny.

“And the peoples will conquer every where!

“But you can hardly live to witness the victory, if you dedicate yourselves to the combat with unflinching fidelity; for this you can do only with the firm resolve to fall a sacrifice in this most glorious, noblest victory.

“Think of this when you again encounter the enemy.

“And being animated by the lively belief that none of you would prefer a degraded existence to a glorious death; that you all feel with me that it is impossible to enslave a nation, whose sons resemble the heroes of Szolnok, Hatvan, Tápió-Bicske, Isaszeg, Waizen, Nagy-Sarló, and Komorn—I have for you in future, even amid the fiercest thunder of the battle, but one cry:

“*Forward, comrades! forward!*”

“Think of this when you again encounter the enemy.”

The attack against the dynasty, which I designedly associated with my review of the rapid, fortunate course of the recent campaign, was intended to shake the fundamental aversion of the old constitutional soldiers to the law of the 14th of April, and thus in some measure to become myself the mediator between them and the part of the army well disposed to the law.

This in itself hazardous attempt—thanks to the popularity

which I enjoyed among the old soldiers of the main army especially—had nevertheless the favorable result, that those of the officers belonging to this category who could by no means feel that their further participation in the war was compatible even with the mere silent acknowledgment of this law, quitted the ranks of the active army, at least with every possible avoidance of any exciting *éclat*; while the rest—reckoning the silent acknowledgment as none at all—soothed themselves with the circumstance that no official homage whatever had been offered in the name of the army to the law of the 14th of April.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE state of affairs in the sphere of operations of the Hungarian main army, immediately after the 26th of April (the day of the complete relief of Komorn), was as follows:

On the left bank of the Danube—out of the island of Schütt—the Austrian forces were retreating to the right bank of the Waag, in part forced back, in part merely followed, in the valley of Túrócz, by Armin Görgei's expeditionary detachment; along the road from Lévenecz to Neutra by the expeditionary column, which had been sent from the seventh army corps to Verebély before the relief of Komorn; in the island of Schütt itself the western besieging corps falling back toward Presburg, abandoned that part of the island which is situated next to the fortress, to the extent of one or two days' march, to a column detached from the garrison of Komorn.

On the right bank of the Danube, the Austrian main army, after the evacuation of the city of Pesth, which took place on the 23d or 24th of April—leaving as a garrison in the fortress of Ofen (Budavár) some battalions under the command of Major-general Hentzi—had divided itself into two unequal parts, and begun its retreat out of the interior of the country toward its frontier, on two diverging lines. The smaller part, the corps d'armée of Ban Baron Jellachich, marched along the Danube down to the Drau; while the larger part (comprising that por-



tion of the army which had been defeated by Colonel Pöltenberg on the 20th of April at Kémend on the river Gran, and obliged to retreat to the right bank of the Danube over the pontoon at Gran) retreating on the Fleischhauer road, the shortest line toward Vienna, having been accidentally stopped by the battle on the 26th of April in its retrograde movement, continued it again on the following day in company with the besieging corps of Komorn.

On our side, General Aulich, as soon as Pesth was occupied, had undertaken the formation of a bridge across the Danube below the capitals, in order to reach without delay the lines of junction between the garrison of Ofen and the Jellachich corps; Colonel Kmety, on his part, had the pontoon over the Danube between Gran and Párkány restored, and removed his army division to the right bank of the river near Gran; while the other two-thirds of the seventh army corps, under Pöltenberg, with the Damjanics and Klapka army corps, after the battle of the 26th of April, remained together in the fortified camp at Komorn, where we confined ourselves, on the 27th, after the retreat of the enemy toward Raab, to occupying with strong detachments the places lying nearest to us on the main road to Raab and the Fleischhauer road, and having the enemy's retreat observed by means of patrols.

When we perceived from the reports that arrived, that the enemy, not intending any offensive repelling operation, really hastened to confirm the declaration of our prisoners, that the Austrian army would remain on the defensive till the irruption of the Russian army; it would perhaps have been best for us, strategically considered, without taking any serious notice of the hostile garrison of Ofen and the Jellachich corps, which was withdrawing toward the south, speedily to have reunited the main army, and opened immediately the new campaign by an offensive on the enemy's principal line of retreat by Raab toward Vienna.

But it so happened that the batteries of the Damjanics and Klapka corps in the last encounter (on the 26th of April) had fired almost their last cartridge, and the supplies of ammunition, which were to come from beyond the Theiss, had suddenly inexplicably failed. The batteries of the two divisions of the seventh army corps, under Pöltenberg, in the fortified camp at Komorn



—of the third division of the same corps under Kmety, near the Gran—and, if I mistake not, likewise those of the second corps (Aulich) near the capitals—were still, it is true, able to take the field, but only for one, or at most two serious days' fighting.

The execution of the present idea of an uninterrupted prosecution of our offensive operations against the hostile main army was consequently delayed by the necessity of previously awaiting the arrival of the next transport of ammunition, which, according to the official information received by the commander of the artillery of the army, ought to have taken place long ago—a necessity rendered imperative, considering the certainty of finding the enemy's resistance as well as the amount of danger increased with every step in advance. The reflections, moreover—as may be conceived, of an unusually vivid cast, and chiefly of a political nature—to which the Debreczin impromptu of the 14th of April gave rise, soon led to the complete abandonment of that idea; and this the more certainly, as my two strategic counselors (General Klapka and the chief of the general staff) did not agree in their views as to what object of operations it would be most judicious for us next to choose.

The chief of the general staff persisted in his original proposal to continue the offensive against the main body of the hostile army, which was retreating on the road to Raab, with the simultaneous advance of a part of the garrison of Komorn in the island of Schütt toward Presburg; dwelling at the same time on the great probability of being able within a few days to restore regularity in the accidentally interrupted arrival of supplies of ammunition.

General Klapka, on the contrary, pleaded for the urgent necessity of taking Ofen, pointing out that this fortress, so long as it was occupied by the enemy, blocked up the chain-bridge, the most important communication for us across the Danube during the just-proposed offensive. This communication, he added, was the most important, because situated on the shortest line between the active army on the right bank of the Danube and the war-stores behind the Theiss, and as a permanent solid connection between both banks of the Danube the least exposed to disturbing influences.

General Klapka mentioned further, that the hostile garrison of Ofen rendered insecure the principal communication with the

roads leading from central Hungary, and stopped completely the traffic on the Danube between the north and south of the country. It was true that another communication, out of the immediate reach of the fortress, might be substituted in the mean time, and could be perfectly secured by closely investing the fortress with a force sufficient to frustrate all sallies of the hostile troops of occupation; but as the deduction of such considerable forces as seemed necessary for closely investing it could by no means be borne, considering the proposed offensive against Raab, only a one-sided palliative would be gained by the investment, for the traffic on the Danube would remain interrupted, as before, in its most susceptible point. It could be re-established only by a resolute enterprise against Ofen calculated for the reduction of the fortress.

Such an undertaking seemed moreover to be enjoined by the prospect of coming into possession (most important to Hungary) of the armament of the fortified place and of the enormous quantities of war-supplies of all kinds which were stored there; but most urgently was it called for by the consideration of the inspiring impulse to the most strenuous prosecution of the war, which would be imparted to the nation by the reconquest of Ofen, its historical palladium.

General Klapka asserted finally, that the march against Ofen had the sympathies of the army in its favor; and if moreover, he concluded, there be taken into consideration, on the one hand, the certainty of becoming master of the fortress on the first assault with an imposing force, if not without drawing a sword—a certainty which, according to all the information hitherto received respecting the moral state of the garrison, was scarcely to be doubted; on the other hand, the probability that the news of the unexpectedly sudden fall of Ofen would only increase the present consternation in the hostile camp, and thus the more favor our offensive to be commenced immediately afterward with undivided strength;—then the reconquest of Ofen must be acknowledged to be at present the nearest operation of the war for the Hungarian main army.

Klapka's proposal was so far in accordance with Kossuth's last intimations to me, as they likewise urged above all things the reconquest of Ofen.

Klapka agreed with Kossuth also in believing the rumors about

the defection of the garrison of Ofen. This he did, nevertheless, not to such an extent as Kossuth, according to whom the mere crossing of some Aulich battalions from the Pesth bank of the Danube to that at Ofen, would be immediately followed by the fall of the fortress. His confidence in the truth of these rumors, however, was still strong enough to lead him to suppose that the garrison of the fortress, in the face of an imposing force, would not let it come to a regular siege.

Still I most decidedly distrusted these rumors, breathing contempt of the adversary. They savored of the very same national arrogance, which had found its ultimate expression in the law of the 14th of April, and—to my surprise—a thousandfold echo even in the ranks of the “young army.” And if I nevertheless did not deny the probability of becoming master of Ofen without a regular siege, the reason of this was solely that I doubted the possibility of rendering the place tenable by means of some temporary fortifications, it having been acknowledged to be untenable scarcely four months before, and abandoned by us without drawing a blade to the victorious army of Field-marshal Windischgrätz.

However, neither the erroneously supposed facility of taking Ofen, in which Klapka and myself agreed, although on different grounds, nor the other reasons by which he supported his proposal, nor Kossuth’s urging the same object as Klapka recommended to be next aimed at, nor finally the circumstance that I estimated far higher than the chief of the general staff the uncertainty of speedily re-establishing again an uninterrupted supply of ammunition—none of these sufficed to make Klapka’s plan of operations appear to me preferable to that of the chief of the general staff.

The motives which chiefly decided me to abandon the idea of an uninterrupted prosecution of our offensive operations against the hostile main army were, as I have already indicated, mainly of a political nature.

My personal conviction of the impossibility of inducing *those parts of the main army which were opposed to the law of the 14th of April*, even assuming the most favorable course of the proposed operations on the line to Raab, to prosecute them beyond the frontier of the country, led me—considering the insignificant military importance of the western frontiers of Hun-



gary situated next to the right bank of the Danube—to perceive that the final strategic aim, which ought to have formed the basis of those operations, was wanting.

Through this conviction I was further led to the idea of giving to those operations—should the fortune-of-war repeatedly smile upon us during them—at least a *political* conclusion, by inviting, immediately after reaching the Lajtha, in the name of the victorious Hungarian army, the Austrian Government as well as the Hungarian Diet to prefer the way of a peaceable agreement, based on the Hungarian constitution of 1848, to the exasperated continuance of an unhappy civil war.

The probability of the success of this step I deduced from the following considerations :

The octroyed constitution of Olmütz which denied to the kingdom of Hungary its further existence, and the resolution of the Diet at Debreczin that of the empire of Austria, both stood on one and the same level of “*impracticability* WITHOUT FOREIGN AID.”

In Olmütz as well as in Debreczin a great word had been spoken, without its having been previously maturely considered, whether their own disposable forces were sufficient to justify the word by the deed, though only in the sense of the right of might.

Those at Olmütz, who had therein set those at Debreczin a good example, maintained also their precedence—so it happened accidentally—in the course that undeceived both in a humiliating manner.

The result of the April campaign—according to the known declarations of the captured Austrian soldiers about the impending Russian intervention in Hungary—seemed to have forced upon the Austrian ministers, with the perception of the greatness of the danger into which they had brought Austria by their acts, simultaneously the extreme means for saving it—the aid of Russia.

The question now was, whether the Austrian Government would be *more* injured by desisting from the realization of the octroyed constitution, or by the lie which it was about to give to its own power by having recourse to Russian aid.

According to my simple notions of state-policy, if it seemed impossible for the Austrian Government without foreign aid to carry out the experiment of forming, although only provisionally, a *homogeneous* state from the *heterogeneous* constituent parts of

the Austrian monarchy, under a simultaneous guarantee of the equality of rights of the nationalities calculated rather to separate than to unite them—it had been better altogether to abandon this hopeless experiment, and return to Austria's relation to Hungary, which, based on national rights, had been regulated by our constitution modified in the year 1848.

The Austrian Government—after the Hungarian Diet should have abandoned in like manner the carrying out of its experiment, still more hopeless without foreign aid, of creating an *independent Hungary*—could undertake this, without compromising its authority *in the interior* of the country more than it had already done by the ineffectual proclamation of the octroyed constitution, as shown by the result of the April campaign, or than it now seemed to be taking the best way of compromising it *abroad* likewise, by receiving Russian aid.

The Austrian Government could perfectly well disengage itself from the octroyed constitution without shaking the reverence for the dynasty, any more than it had already done by overthrowing the constitution of Hungary sanctioned in 1848.

It could finally put its hand to an agreement with the Hungarian Diet based on the Hungarian constitution of 1848—introduced, as I said, by the peaceable initiative of the Hungarian army, assumed to have victoriously advanced as far as the Lajtha—with the assured prospect, that the agreement would take place with some modifications of the Hungarian constitution in favor of the central power of Austria; for in case such an agreement should have been wrecked by the opposition of the Debreczin Diet, I was firmly resolved to dare the extreme against it.

I think it unnecessary to point out, how far from me is the thought of pleading here for the practicability of my just developed idea of reconciliation (at that time), in the face of the *fact* that the Austrian Government still—two full years since the last active opposition of Hungary to the realization of the octroyed constitution has been subdued by Russian aid—thinks it can not do without the proviso, equally convenient as unconstitutional, as well as a state of siege, even in *those* extra-Hungarian parts of free, united, constitutional Austria, in which a similar opposition has never been observable.

I confine myself simply to communicating the reflections on the opportunity of carrying out the idea of reconciliation, which

were stirred up in me during the events I am describing, by the endeavor to gain a clear way for the salvation of the fatherland between the Olmütz octroyed constitution and the Debreczin 14th of April—at that time the Scylla and Charybdis of the constitutional kingdom of Hungary.

A knowledge of that *leading idea* is indispensably necessary to the formation of a right judgment on my conduct during those days.

The difficulties connected with the realization of this idea of reconciliation, the precariousness, nay, daring of the steps necessary to it, I nevertheless did not conceal from myself even at that time.

But what serious attempt to save Hungary from that fatal dilemma would have been connected with fewer difficulties? would have been less daring, less precarious?

And I was urged to dare some serious attempt *in the direction indicated*, by the clear inward conviction that such an attempt was not only better fitted to promote the welfare of the nation, but was also far more conformable to its historical character, than the humiliating acknowledgment of the Olmütz octroyed constitution on the one hand, or the arrogance of the Debreczin 14th of April on the other.

Consequently, when I acceded to Klapka's proposal to let the reconquest of Ofen precede the vigorous prosecution of our offensive operations against the hostile principal army, I did so with the conviction that the attempt to facilitate an agreement between the Austrian Government and the Hungarian Diet, based on the constitution of the year 1848, must have far more chance of success if the fortress of Ofen was previously ours, than if it continued in the possession of the enemy in spite of our supposed victorious offensive operations, apparently menacing Vienna itself.

But the more ardently I now wished, on the one hand, for the *speedy* fall of Ofen, and the greater, on the other hand, my distrust of the innumerable rumors about the depressed moral state of the garrison of the fortress, the more resolutely, once determined to act against Ofen, must I accede also to Klapka's proposal, that it should be undertaken with an imposing force. Although prejudiced by the preconceived opinion, that the fortress of Ofen could scarcely be sufficiently tenable to be held long against the attacks of infantry alone, if vigorously supported by a brisk fire



of howitzers—the ammunition necessary for which, it so happened, could in this instance be taken from the stores of the fortress of Komorn;—I nevertheless believed in the probability of an energetic resistance on the part of the garrison, but thought to render it of no avail by the massive superiority of our forces on all points of attack.

I consequently appointed, besides the second army corps (Aulich), which moreover was already stationed near the capitals, also the first corps (Klapka) and the third corps (Damjanics), together with the Kmety division of the seventh corps, for the operations against Ofen; while only the remainder of the latter corps, under Poltenberg, was to be directed against Raab; and a part of the garrison of Komorn, on the same height with the former two divisions, to advance on the island of Schütt.

General Klapka declared that he completely agreed in this measure; the chief of the general staff, however, only on condition, that the operations against Ofen, once begun, were not to be given up again, if we should be suddenly undeceived as to the presupposed facility of taking the fortress, and thereby a vacillation be brought into our operations, which would infallibly be closely followed by the discouragement of our army, and the victory of the enemy.

In this consultation about the next operations of the main army we kept in view the hostile corps of Ban Baron Jellachich, which had been directed from Ofen southward—trusting to the assurances which Kossuth had given us during his sojourn at Gödöllő\* about the simultaneous movements of General Bem—only in so far as we assumed, that he, who, according to these assurances, was to have crossed the Danube at Baja with a force of 16,000 men in the second half of the month of April, would effect this passage, though too late—as we thought when in Gödöllő—to help us in the relief of Komorn, at all events early enough to thwart Ban Jellachich in his march toward the south.

\* See Chapter xliii.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

IN consequence of the resolution of the Diet at Debreczin of the 14th of April, the Committee of Defense was dissolved, and in its stead a provisional governor of the country, with a ministry by his side, took the reins of the government of Hungary.

The governor of the country was Kossuth. He offered me the portfolio of the minister of war. I received his letter containing the offer before the consultation upon our next war-operations, described in the preceding chapter, had taken place.

This offer was very welcome to me, inasmuch as I therein greeted the possibility of at once putting a finishing stroke to the use-and-wont mode in which the war-ministry had been conducted, to the great injury, in many respects, of matters relating to the defense of the country.

But in order to charge myself in person with the portfolio, I should have been obliged to quit the army; and I could by no means entertain a thought of this, so long as I clung to that *leading idea*, to which Klapka's proposal, that the capture of Ofen should be our next undertaking, was indebted for my assent.

Generals Damjanics and Klapka were also of opinion—though for a different reason, since I had not thought the time was come for communicating to them this my *leading idea*—that I ought to remain with the army. Considering the uncommon popularity which I enjoyed in the main army—said they—my removing from the chief command might affect the troops in a manner prejudicial to the successful progress of our operations.

The necessity for saving the war-ministry without delay from the state into which it had sunk, destitute alike of energy and prudence—the occasion just then seeming to be favorable for doing so—was nevertheless not less evident; and accordingly General Damjanics offered to undertake for the present in my room the direction of the business of the war-ministry.

Damjanics was at that time with Aulich, the Hungarian general of the main army most to be relied upon before the enemy.

By his separation from its ranks for a time, it would suffer a sensible though temporary loss.

Consequently it may be conceived that the only reason which induced me to consent to Damjanics departing to Debreczin as my provisional substitute in the war-ministry, was the conviction, on the one hand, that Hungary's war in self-defense, must come to a disgraceful end, if the real cancer of the defense of the country—the arbitrary conduct of the separate independent commanders of troops, and the favoritism prevailing in the nomination of officers and promotions—should continue as heretofore, from weakness or want of discernment, to be encouraged and cherished in the war-ministry itself; on the other hand, that Damjanics was just the man very speedily and radically to extirpate these cancerous diseases.

The loss might therefore truly be said to be irreparable, which not only the army but the cause of Hungary in general sustained, when General Damjanics, on the evening before the day fixed for his departure from Komorn to Debreczin, in consequence of an unfortunate leap from a carriage, shattered his leg, and was thereby rendered forever unfit for service.

After this lamentable accident, General Klapka declared himself ready to act as my substitute in the war-ministry. But apart from the circumstance, that I should miss *him* much with the army—to whose advice I always used to attach great importance—he seemed to me to be of too yielding a nature to be equal to the Herculean task which awaited him at Debreczin.

There was, however, no other choice left me, if I would not run the risk of seeing the ministry of war fall under a perhaps still more doubtful guidance than that of General Mészáros had been.

General Klapka consequently left the army, to betake himself to Debreczin. In his stead Colonel Nagy-Sándor undertook the command of the first army corps; that of the third corps (Damjanics) was intrusted to Colonel Knézich.

Both colonels were accordingly advanced to the rank of generals.



## CHAPTER L.

THE sudden retardation of the confidently expected supplies of ammunition, had, on the 26th of April (the day of the complete relief of Komorn), placed us in the strange position of being obliged to terminate a battle, favorable to us as regarded our success on that day, with a *defensive* bearing.

For the same reason also we could not—as has been mentioned—on the following days continue with our whole strength the offensive operations, which had originally been intended only for the relief of Komorn. The speedy pursuit of the enemy by the two Pöltenberg army divisions—that third part of our force united on the evening of the 26th of April in the fortified camp of Komorn, of which the artillery was still fit for action—did not, however, promise any favorable result; because the hostile main army, which had been opposed to us on the 26th of April, had begun its retreat from the field of battle toward Raab in the best order and *voluntarily*: therefore, though retreating, it was by no means in such a condition as that it could not have repulsed, with sensible disadvantage to the pursuer himself, a pursuit undertaken on our part with proportionately weak forces.

Meanwhile the inexplicable, sudden retardation of the supplies of ammunition was the very natural cause of our irresolution during several days, in consequence of which it happened that Pöltenberg did not reach Raab with his two army divisions till the 1st of May, after it had been evacuated by the enemy; and the other parts of our main army could not begin the blockade of the fortress of Ofen till late in the forenoon of the 4th of May, in the following manner:

Below Ofen, on the road from Stuhlweissenburg, secured against the fire from the fortress by the Blocksberg, the second corps (Aulich) encamped, and took upon itself the close investment of the fortress, commencing from the Danube as far as up to the Fleischhauer road.

With the investing range of the second corps, that of the first

(Nagy-Sándor)—which established itself behind the Spitzbergel, and undertook the investment as far as the little Schwabenberg—was in close junction.

From hence to near the suburb (the Wasserstadt), situated to the north of Ofen on the bank of the Danube, the investing range of the third corps (Knézich) extended, which had advanced on the road from Kovácsy up to the suburb of Christinenstadt.

The prolongation of the blockading line to the Danube again, above the fortress, was assigned to the Kmety division, which encamped on the southern extremity of Alt-Ofen (O'-Buda), north of the Wasserstadt.

The principal rampart of the fortress crowned the elongated hill, which, rising close to the bank of the Danube, adjoins the edge of the plateau on which the city proper of Ofen stands. This rampart, taken as a whole, formed in fact only four fronts: two long ones, almost parallel with the course of the Danube, and two others, short as compared with the former two, which joined (in reference to the course of the Danube) the *upper* and *lower* ends of the long fronts, and thereby completely inclosed the inner space of the fortress.

The eastern of the two long fronts faced the Danube, or what is the same, the city of Pesth. It formed in the ground-plan, as respects its principal form, an obtuse re-entering angle, and consisted of a line of defense of remarkable irregularity, which was many times broken through at unequal distances.

In the apex of the re-entering angle of this front, above the prolongation of the chain-bridge, was situated one of the four principal entrances to the fortress, the "Water-gate."

Below this point, immediately on the bank of the stream, was a forcing-pump, which supplied the town and fortress with water from the Danube.

The securing of this forcing-pump, situated beyond the principal rampart at the southern end of the Wasserstadt, consequently quite exposed to any attacks from the north and south along the bank of the stream, had been effected by the Austrians, during their occupation of the capitals, by several intrenchments, formed of palisades and of walls and houses prepared for being defended by infantry, which leant on the one side against the principal rampart, on the other descended into the Danube, and which separated from the outside, together with the forcing-pump, the

opening also of the chain-bridge on the right bank of the Danube. The access from the Pesth bank—the left—over the chain-bridge itself, partly dismantled of its carriage-way, was moreover defended by a blockhouse erected on the prolongation of the bridge in the space inclosed by the intrenchments. The long front in question extended upward and downward far beyond the points on which these intrenchments leant.

The part of the Wasserstadt nearest to the forcing-pump lay immediately under the northern half of the Pesth front, repeatedly mentioned; while from the high commanding principal rampart—the southern half of this front—the main approach through the Wasserstadt to the forcing-pump, the principal line of attack of the northern intrenchments which protected it, could be cannonaded in its length, passing over them.

These local dispositions, however, we learned to know and appreciate only during the siege, after having previously many times dearly paid for our experience.

Thus much about the eastern long or Pesth front, from recollection; there being no plan of the fortress of Ofen, as it then stood, at my command.

The western long front of the fortress faced the Spitzbergel with its southern half, with its northern end the little Schwabenberg.

Its principal rampart presented the aspect of a straight line of defense, strengthened by projecting rondels only on two points, the northern terminating one, and south of its centre.

The rondel situated, as has been said, south of the centre of the front, namely, the "Weissenburg" rondel, had to play the most important part during the siege.

It divided the most western long front of the fortress into two unequal halves, a southern (the shorter), and a northern (the longer one). The principal rampart of the southern half appeared, compared with that of the northern, to be somewhat re-entering, and differed moreover from it in that not far from the Weissenburg rondel it changed from a simple enclosing wall into a terraced one; while the northern in its whole length consisted only of a simple uninterrupted straight enclosing wall.

Through the Weissenburg rondel itself another of the four principal entrances to the fortress led, the "Stuhlweissenburg-gate;" it was, however, blocked up.



Of the two short fronts, the southern (an irregular combination, and one very favorable for the defense in consequence of the points of support offered by the locality) with the "Castle-gate" looked toward the Blocksberg, and the northern (a straight line of defense with a flanking fire, like the western long front) with the "Vienna-gate" toward that ridge of heights between which and the Danube the Wasserstadt and Alt Ofen are situated.

The hill on which the fortress stands is, as it were, the last spur of this ridge of heights. Both are perceptibly separated only by a saddle, over which the Vienna suburb extends from the Wasserstadt as far as the northern end of the Christinenstadt.

The inner space of the fortress, corresponding with the two long fronts, was, for its small width, disproportionately long; while the circumstances, that the western long (Weissenburg) front presented an almost straight line of defense, but the Pesth front formed a re-entering angle, necessitated a considerable contraction of the inner space at the apex of this re-entering angle. Just on this contraction lay, in the Pesth front, the open Water-gate, serving as the principal communication with that part of the declivity and the bank of the stream which was protected against our attacks by the intrenchments; in the Weissenburg front the rondel of that name.

As the last-mentioned long front was divided by the Weissenburg rondel, the inner space of the fortress seemed also to be divided by the foresaid contraction into two unequal halves, a southern shorter, and a northern longer one. In the southern, besides the smaller part of the town, stood likewise the royal castle, together with the park belonging to it, which was surrounded by a high strong wall, exposed on none of its points to the straight effective fire, and formed the extreme line of defense of the southeastern part of the fortress.

As objects of attack—the castle-park, with the castle-gate, on the west and close to the park, and the nearest parts of the principal rampart, were assigned to the second corps (Aulich); the adjoining southern half of the Weissenburg front and its rondel, to the first corps (Nagy-Sándor); the salient angle on the northern extremity of this long front, together with the adjacent northern short one, the Vienna front with its gate, to the third corps (Knézych); and the forcing-pump on the bank of the Danube, protected by the intrenchments, to the Kmety division.

In the range of the second corps on the northern edge of the Blocksberg, at the commencement of the investment a twelve-pounder field-battery was planted against the fortress; as well as another battery of the same calibre on the little Schwabenberg, and both the increased seven-pounder howitzer batteries belonging to the seventh corps, on the ridge opposite the Vienna front. The battery on the little Schwabenberg and the two howitzer batteries were in the range of the third corps.

It was not my intention to attack the place without previously having summoned the garrison to surrender. The over-hasty zeal of the commander of the howitzer batteries, however, caused a cannonade on our part before this summons had been sent.

This attack was of course stopped as speedily as was permitted by the considerable distance, especially of the Blocksberg battery, from the head-quarters at the northern extremity of Christinenstadt; and after this was effected, an Austrian officer, whom we had brought with us a prisoner, was sent into the fortress with a written summons addressed personally to the commander Major-general Hentzi.

As I possess no copy of this letter, of the agreement of which with the original I could be morally convinced, I can indicate here only that part of its contents which has remained vividly in my memory.

It contained :

Information that Ofen was invested by us.

An opinion, that it would not be possible to maintain the place long against us.

A summons to surrender it, with the promise of honorable treatment as prisoners of war (the officers with their arms, the men without).

The assurance of a humane treatment of the prisoners, even in case the garrison intended to resist to the last, provided that the chain-bridge and the city of Pesth, from which the fortress had to expect no attack, were spared : if this condition were not complied with, however, the pledge of my word of honor, that after the taking of the fortress, the whole garrison should be put to the sword.

An appeal, founded on the rumors that Major-general Hentzi was a native of Hungary, to his patriotic sentiments ; and finally,

An explanation, that I had chosen for the bearer of this letter an Austrian officer, who was our prisoner, because our trumpets used to be detained in the Austrian camp.

I remember further to have declared in the same letter, that this violation of the personal liberty of a hostile trumpet, as well as the bombardment of Pesth, and the attempt to destroy the chain-bridge, were infamous acts.

My view of the moral character of those actions is still the same: I must now, however, here *retract* the assertion, that it was *usual* with the Austrian army to make our trumpets prisoners. I know of only the one case of this kind, which I have mentioned in the seventh Chapter of this work. Nevertheless my assertion at that time appears to be justified, inasmuch as, rendered cautious by that case, I could never again determine to send a Hungarian officer as trumpet into an Austrian camp; and the cases, where this has been attempted by other leaders of Hungarian troops, and the international usage which guarantees the inviolability of the trumpet in the hostile camp has been *respected* on the part of the Austrians, did not come to my knowledge till *after* the time in which the date of my letter to Major-general Hentzi falls.

The reply of Major-general Hentzi to me contrasted very strangely with the absurd rumors of an unparalleled depression in the garrison of Ofen, in consequence of which Kossuth could hardly stop till some of Aulich's battalions had crossed the Danube, that the said garrison might not have to wait any longer for the plausible reason they desired for laying down their arms; on which rumors also Klapka had principally based his proposal, first of all to march against Ofen.

In this answer Major-general Hentzi scoffingly repudiated the assumption, that he would evacuate without resistance the place confided to him; declared Ofen to be a *really tenable* place, although our precipitate retreat in the early part of the year 1849 seemed to have proved the contrary; called upon me immediately to put a stop to my firing, if I wished Pesth to be spared; added moreover, that he must *in any case*, and directly, bombard Pesth, *because he was forced by a cannonading which had just now been commenced there.\** He then corrected my erroneous

\* Major-general Hentzi's assertion, that a cannonading had *taken place from Pesth* against Ofen, was *untrue*.



supposition that Hungary was his native country; and declared finally, that he would hold out to the last man, as in duty and honor bound.

Meanwhile General Klapka, on his journey from Komorn through Pesth to Debreczin, had stopped some days in Pesth; and during this time, partly from his own reflections, partly from information obtained about the state of the fortress of Ofen and the disposition of the garrison, had become convinced that the taking of Ofen might not be so speedily accomplished, as he had endeavored to prove to the chief of the general staff and myself, in our consultation at Komorn on our further operations.

This new conviction caused him in writing to dissuade me from storming Ofen. By the date, the letter in which he did so (it was, if I remember right, of the 1st or 2d of May) seemed to have been intended to find me still on the march against Ofen, while the means which Klapka had taken to forward it to me in-

To justify this assertion, and the bombardment of the city of Pesth, which had actually been commenced in the afternoon of the 4th of May, on the following day a placard made its appearance, in which Major-general Hentzi described even the effect of one of the balls fired from Pesth:

"The Ofen pier"—so it was said in this placard, as near as I remember—"has been struck and injured by a projectile from a cannon on the lower part of both of its corners, facing the Pesth bank."

This statement was correct, as I convinced myself personally after the fall of the fortress: nevertheless the assumption, that this projectile had come from the Pesth bank was just as incorrect as the whole assertion of a cannonading from Pesth was untrue. Such an attack could not have taken place, because, in order not to expose Pesth to a bombardment, I had given, before the investment of Ofen, an order to General Aulich, not only to avoid any attack, nay even demonstration against the fortress from the Pesth bank, but not even to allow a gun to be seen on any point of the bank situated within range of the fortress; and because the result of a subsequent investigation proved that *this order had been conscientiously obeyed*.

This damage on the upper pier could consequently only have been caused by a ball from the twelve-pounder battery, which had been planted on the Blocksberg.

I may repeat here, that my intention, not to attack the fortress before having summoned it to surrender, had been frustrated by the precipitancy of the commander of the howitzer batteries; that the twelve-pounder battery on the little Schwabenberg and on the Blocksberg began to fire immediately after the howitzer batteries; and that the latter especially, to which the order to stop firing could not be communicated so quickly as to the others, on account of the considerable distance from my head-quarters to the point where it was planted, had already been playing unceasingly when Major-general Hentzi replied to my letter.

dicated the contrary intention; for I did not receive it till after Major-general Hentzi had been very categorically summoned to surrender, and had hereupon given just as categorical a refusal.

After that summons, however, and the reply to it, my views of what is called "military honor" no longer permitted me to retire from before Ofen, without having previously exerted myself to the uttermost to take it.

Moreover, regard for the honor of our arms, acting at present as a motive for the siege of Ofen, was supported also by those political reasons which had mainly determined me, in the consultation held at Komorn about the next operations, to give the preference to Klapka's proposal over that of the chief of the general staff (see Chapter XLVIII).

If I had then supposed that the *speedy* fall of Ofen would present a favorable opportunity for the attempt to invite to a peaceable agreement the Austrian Government as well as the Hungarian Diet, in the name of the Hungarian main army, assumed to have victoriously advanced as far as the Lajtha—I could not fail to perceive, after Major-general Hentzi's energetic reply to my summons, the absolute necessity there was that Ofen should fall, whether sooner or later, before I could have the most remote idea of daring this attempt with any prospect of success, even if the progress that attended the immediate offensive toward the Lajtha were ever so successful.

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## CHAPTER LI.

MAJOR-GENERAL HENTZI had not said too much, when he asserted, in his reply, that Ofen, since the occupation of the capitals by the Austrians, had been changed into a tenable place. I was soon to have an opportunity of convincing myself of the correctness of this assertion, and of the precipitancy of my contrary opinion.

While our prisoner, the Austrian officer, was on his way to the fortress with my letter to Hentzi, the Kmety division stood in the Wasserstadt, awaiting the order to storm the intrenchments.

The trumpet returned with Major-general Hentzi's answer; and a few minutes after the orders to attack were on their way to the Kmety division, and the batteries posted on the Blocksberg, the little Schwabenberg, and the ridge opposite the Vienna front.

Kmety attacked courageously, as he always did, and was indirectly supported by the brisk fire of our batteries, which aimed at the general discouragement of the garrison.

Our intention in storming the intrenchments in front of the forcing-pump was that we might destroy the latter.

The fortress of Ofen possessed, as far as I knew, neither cisterns nor wells.

From time immemorial two aqueducts had served to remedy this defect. One of them, which supplied the fortress with good water for drinking, from a spring on the great Schwabenberg, we had already destroyed. If we should succeed in like manner with the second, the forcing-pump, every supply of water would be completely cut off from the interior of the fortress; and the garrison, in my opinion, could not hold out many days.

The storming of the Kmety division, however, miscarried, and the losses we suffered in it were sufficient to deter us from the repetition of a similar separate undertaking.

The fire of our batteries also had to be moderated even during the course of the first day, and confined to merely answering the different hostile shots, because the enigmatical hindrance, which had put a stop to the regular arrival of supplies of ammunition now for a long time, was still unremoved.

I have a very lively recollection of the fact, that the commander of the artillery of the main army did not succeed till during the further progress of the siege of Ofen in discovering at the same time the cause of the delay that had taken place in sending the ammunition for the field-artillery, as well as the reason of this delay.

Immediately after the evacuation of the city of Waizen on the part of the enemy (April 10th), the rumor had been spread beyond the Theiss, that the capitals of the country were already in our hands, and that the communication by means of the Pesth and Szolnok railway would consequently be reopened.

From this rumor, the individual charged with forwarding the ammunition to the main army was induced to direct the *convois*—instead of sending them, as hitherto, by Miskólcz and Ipolyság,



or on the Gyöngyös main road—to Szolnok, supposing that by making use of the railway, they would reach the place of their destination much sooner. But when doing so he omitted to inform the commander of the artillery of the main army that he had changed the route of the transport; and thus these supplies of ammunition—which the artillery commander, after having vainly expected their arrival for some days in the fortified camp of Komorn, had ordered to be searched for on all imaginable routes, except, of course, on the impracticable railway line—remained undiscovered for a long time, first in Szolnok, till the re-opening of the railroad communication (in the end of April or beginning of May), and afterward even in Pesth also.

The inevitable consequence of this state of things, the sudden silence of our batteries—after the brisk fire of artillery by which the storming of the Kmety division against the intrenchments had been seconded—which during more than a week had been only now and then partially broken through, had probably assured the enemy; for all this time he did scarcely any thing from which we could have inferred that any notice was taken of our preparations for a very serious attempt to become masters of the fortress; while we could least of all conceal from his observation those preparations which most clearly betrayed our intention to effect a breach in a part of the fortress wall.

After the unsuccessful attack of the Kmety division on the intrenchments, I agreed with the chief of the general staff to defer the assault, which at first we had intended to undertake without loss of time, until it could either be combined with the simultaneous use of a breach, or we should be convinced that it was impossible for us to effect a breach with the means of siege at our command.

We came to this conclusion from the attention we paid to the elevation (the Spitzberg) facing the southern half of the Weissenburg front, but especially that short space opposite it which lay south of the Weissenburg rondel, immediately between it and the commencing point of the terraced exterior inclosure; this elevation being rather favorable for the erection of a breach-battery.

For the interior of the fortress at this place, as well as in by far the greater part of its circumference, was separated from the exterior only by a simple wall, which, though strong, was completely exposed to our direct fire.

The unusually great distance of the point fit for the erection of the breach-battery from the wall of the fortress, however, rendered the probability of success the more seriously doubtful, as we could arm the breach-battery at most with only four twenty-four and one eighteen-pounder.\* The sensible loss, moreover, with which the attack of the Kmety division on the intrenchments in front of the forcing-pump had been repulsed, had at once created in me so much respect for the strength of the fortress of Ofen, that the successful result of a mere escalade by itself seemed now to be far more improbable.

The formation of the battery on the Spitzbergel was consequently energetically undertaken without further deliberation; and that from the time of beginning it till the first breach-shot *more than a week* elapsed, was owing neither to the enemy, who, as has been said, did extremely little to delay its construction, nor to the circumstance that we were obliged to seek for all the materials needed for it, nor to our mistakes during its erection, but solely and exclusively to the narrow-mindedness of General Count Guyon, the then commander of the fortress of Komorn.

This showed itself in his refusing at first to deliver up the above-mentioned five battering-guns, and complaining to Kossuth that I intended to exhaust the means for the defense of the fortress intrusted to him.

Fortunately Kossuth's conviction of the necessity for taking Ofen coincided with my own, although—as I thought I afterward perceived—for quite different reasons; and thus General Guyon had at last to submit to supply our most urgent want of besieging artillery out of the stores of the fortress of Komorn. He did this, however, tardily enough to delay for several days the armament of the breach-battery, which was at last completed.

Foreseeing this opposition to me on the part of Guyon, I had intentionally at first asked only for the delivery of the said captured guns, because they did not belong to the armament of the fortress of Komorn, and consequently Guyon could by no means find in my demand any valid reason for refusing to comply with it.

I was obliged to observe this precaution, in consequence of being

\* These were the same five undamaged pieces of the battery which we had taken from the Austrian blockading-corps in the sudden attack on the trench before Komorn (on the 26th of April); the sixth piece—an eighteen-pounder—was already spiked when it fell into our hands.

at first uncertain whether Kossuth was disposed for or against the regular *siege* of Ofen. But when I thought I could infer with certainty, from Guyon's compliance, which at last took place, that Kossuth had this time taken a decided part for me, or, more correctly, for the furtherance of my undertaking against Ofen, much time as it would cost, I then immediately raised my demands on Guyon somewhat higher, and claimed besides the equipment for a breach-battery, the delivery also of four mortars, I believe thirty-pounders. These, however, I did not receive till near the end of the siege.

Besides the breach-battery, adjoining it on the right a dismounting-battery\* of from twelve to sixteen gun-stands had been thrown up; for the armament of which, however, only six-pounders could be employed, because we had at our disposal no other twelve-pounder batteries than the two posted on the Blocksberg and the little Schwabenberg.

Opposite these approaches, which were in fact not of very great consequence, the enemy thought he had done enough, when he armed the Weissenburg rondel with cannon, and planted besides four pieces of the largest calibre (if I remember right, they were four-and-twenty-pounders), without any protection, on the rampart between the Weissenburg rondel and the one situated at the northern salient angle, about a hundred paces distant from the former, and disturbed our workmen from time to time by separate shots.

The only effect of these measures upon us, however, was, that we drew back the first corps (Nagy-Sándor), which was encamping westward from the Spitzbergel, just in the line of these shots, to the ground lying on the Fleischhauer road, which was protected against the fire of the fortress by the western continuation of the Blocksberg.

In like manner I had been obliged by the fire from the northern rondel of the Weissenburg front, on the first day of the siege

\* This dismounting-battery properly originated, so to say, against our will. It was primarily intended for a breach-battery. But when almost completed, the place on which it had been planted, as well as its whole construction, turned out to be not calculated for a breach-battery. The erection of a new breach-battery was now—after the loss of several days—undertaken, close to the left of the former, which was made use of afterward as a dismounting-battery, having been extended on the right several gun-stands.



to draw back with my head-quarters from the suburbs of Christinenstadt. I removed them first to the entrance of the Auwinkel,\* then to the great Schwabenberg.

During the whole time of constructing our batteries we had confined our fire to indispensable replies to that of the enemy. By this we intended, on the one hand, as much as possible to spare our ammunition, which in the mean time had been a little augmented, and to reserve it for the energetic defense of the breach-battery; on the other hand, to confirm the enemy in the remarkable lukewarmness with which he carried on the defense of the Weissenburg front, which was menaced by us, and was notoriously his weakest side.

On the ninth or tenth day of the siege (I can not indicate the day with certainty) the breach-battery began to play.

The first breach-shot was at the same time the signal for all the other batteries to open their fire as briskly as possible on the opposite ramparts of the fortress. Especially the howitzer batteries were to play upon the Vienna front; the twelve-pounder batteries upon the four twenty-four-pounders planted without protection on the rampart of the Weissenburg front; and the six-pounders of the dismounting-battery, thrown up to the right of the breach-battery, upon the enemy's guns on the Weissenburg rondel.

The unexpectedly vehement attack of artillery seemed to make a powerful impression on the defender; for with evident haste he drew back the four twenty-four-pounders from the rampart into the interior of the fortress, behind the outermost row of houses, and allowed our breach-battery to play almost entirely undisturbed during the whole day. It is also possible that, on account of its great distance, he believed he had not much to fear for his rampart from it.

Be this as it may, the gaps, any thing but inconsiderable, which our breach-battery had made in the stone-work, in spite of the great distance, by the evening of the first day were sufficient to rouse the defender to increased activity, and on the next morning his four twenty-four-pounders, protected by traverses against the fire of our twelve-pounder battery, stood again on the rampart; at the same time, on several points of the latter, the digging of a ditch (which doubtless was intended to compen-

\* A pleasure-ground.—*Transl.*

sate for the want of a sheltered rampart-walk) had been begun, and the earth-works behind the breach, which had likewise been commenced during the night, and vigorously continued during the day, plainly showed the intention of isolating this breach from the inner space of the fortress by a kind of intrenchment.

On this and the following days the defender no longer looked idly on, as during the course of the preceding day, while our breach-battery continued its effective brisk fire. On the contrary, he attacked it with a treble cross-fire from three points—to the south of the breach, from the Weissenburg rondel, and from the traverses; while from the interior of the fortress he threw bombs against it.

In spite of all this, by the end of the following day (the third of the assault by the battery), if I am not mistaken, the breach appeared to us to be so far advanced, that we believed it already practicable.

Major-general Hentzi had meanwhile been exerting himself to fulfill his threats in a terrific manner. For Pesth, as on the first day of the siege, so also on some of the following ones, was bombarded with increasing vehemence; and my precipitancy in ordering the general storm in the night of the 17th or 18th of May—without having previously thoroughly convinced myself that the breach was practicable—had its origin in my indignation at these bombardments, which were altogether unjustifiable in whatever light regarded.

The dispositions for this storm indicated as objects of attack—for the second army corps, the park of the castle and the castle-gate with its nearest environs; for the first corps, the breach; for the third corps, the northern rondel with its vicinity on the salient angle of the Vienna and Weissenburg fronts; and for the Kmety division, the intrenchments before the forcing-pump.

The attack commenced shortly after midnight, was unsuccessful on all points, and was discontinued before daybreak.

The storming-columns of the first corps had encountered an obstacle in the overhanging remains of still undemolished stonework at the uppermost edge of the breach, insurmountable without ladders. The imperfection of the breach being masked by the apex of the loose heap of *débris*, which gave way under the feet of the assailants, had escaped our previous observation—confined to a mere glance. The attempt at escalade of the

third corps had been rendered impracticable by the insufficient length of their ladders; that of the second corps, in whose objects of attack this circumstance was not prominent, was defeated by the valor of that part of the garrison by which the park of the castle and its vicinity were defended. Finally, the attack of the Kmety division failed through the impossibility of advancing against the intrenchments along their approaches, upon which projectiles of all kinds were showered down from the ramparts of the Pesth front.

The defensive activity of the enemy, suddenly so vividly excited by the effective fire of our breach-battery, showed itself after this storming in a still higher degree of development than before it. The earth-works on the rampart extending from the Weissenburg to the northern rondel, as well as those behind the breach, were most zealously continued, and, besides, the strengthening of the environs of the castle-gate energetically commenced. For he hastened to demolish some buildings in the vicinity of the castle-gate, which had favored the escalade attempted by the troops of the second corps, and prepared others for defense.

The more reason had we—opposed to an enemy who appeared resolved to dare the worst, and taught by the bitter consequence of my precipitancy, the failure of our first storming—to do all in our power that our next effort for the final fall of the fortress might not again be unsuccessful.

In the attempt of the third corps to escalade the rampart of the fortress near the salient angle of the Vienna and Weissenburg front, it has been mentioned that the length of the ladders they possessed had proved to be insufficient. That the next escalade of the third corps might not fail again from this cause, longer ladders were sought for; and instead of the vicinity of the salient angle, where the rampart of the fortress was almost highest, the part of the Vienna front situated nearest to the gate of that name was fixed as the object of attack for the third corps.

At the first storming, the breach was still impracticable. The breach-battery had consequently immediately afterward to continue its attacks vigorously; and in order to be quite sure of success, it was arranged that the troops of the first army corps, when they next stormed at the breach, should, like those appointed for the escalade exclusively, be provided with ladders.

In the first storming our troops had found the approach to the



breach impeded by occasional high and strong fences of all kinds, as walls, iron gratings, planks, &c. ; these had first of all to be removed out of their way, at a great cost of time and strength. From the loud noise unavoidable in such operations, the enemy could guess our intention long before the arrival of our storming-column at the foot of the breach. Instead of the defender, the assailant consequently was rather the surprised ; for the former began the combat before the latter was in a condition to attack him. The storming had not yet commenced, and already the troops of the first corps were exhausted by their efforts during the advance on the difficult ground, and shaken by the vehement fire of the too-soon alarmed enemy. Before the next escalade all hindrances had therefore to be completely removed from the approach to the breach.

Till now the garrison, especially in the interior of the fortress, had been only occasionally molested by our projectiles ; they had enough of the necessary rest to remain, with a simultaneous abundance of victuals, in perfectly good humor. Undoubtedly it would be of very great advantage to us during the next storm, if they could meanwhile be brought down a little. We thought to attain this object most certainly by bombarding from this time the inner part of the fortress as briskly as the scantiness of our means permitted (we had meanwhile obtained from the fortress of Komorn the above-mentioned four mortars, and had planted them partly on the Blocksberg, partly in the Vienna suburb), and at the same time cannonading it with the twelve-pounder and howitzer batteries, in order to set fire to those buildings especially which were pointed out to us by scouts as magazines and barracks.

By the first storming, it will be seen—if the details just given be duly considered—that the garrison could not by any means be taken by surprise. But the less unexpected an attack, the more doubtful its success, other circumstances being equal. It was consequently of the first importance to insure to the next storming, by some means, the advantage of a surprise.

To this end, immediately on the approach of the first night after the miscarried assault, noisy feigned attacks were made on the whole circuit of the fortress, except on the Pesth front which was inaccessible to us, and continued uninterruptedly till about two in the morning ; at this hour, however, the fire of musketry

and that from the batteries completely ceased, and recommenced only with bright daylight. The repetition of this manœuvre during the two or three following nights was intended, on the one hand, to frustrate the nocturnal undertakings of the enemy, directed perhaps to rendering the breach or the approach to it impracticable; on the other hand, to accustom him to believe that the second hour after midnight was the fixed time, after which till the next night set in, he had no longer to fear any further molestation.

The last repetition of these feigned attacks took place in the night between the 20th and 21st of May.

With the second hour after midnight our brisk nocturnal harassing fire suddenly ceased this time also, and immediately the preparations for the real storm noiselessly began.

Masked by the darkness of the night, the columns approached their objects of attack, awaiting the signal for the onset.

At the stroke of three in the morning all the batteries together sent forth a discharge; then they were silent again. This was the signal for the general storming.

The darkness, which still continued for some time, rendered it impossible at first to observe distinctly what was taking place at the breach, although the situation of the head-quarters was favorable for this purpose. But the flashing of the divers discharges of cannons and muskets from the Weissenburg rondel, the short luminous curves of the hand-grenades thrown from it against the near breach, and the brisk fire of tirailleurs maintained on our part by a dense chain of sharp-shooters deployed in the rear of the real storming-columns against the defenders, in order to facilitate the assault—meanwhile gave us reason to believe that our troops were already on the breach.

Soon afterward, in the twilight, we could perceive that the masses repeatedly stormed up the breach, but were nevertheless as often driven back again by the fierce fire from the Weissenburg rondel. At almost every new assault, however, some of them gained the rampart. But the next moment these also were no longer any where to be seen; the balls of the defenders might have struck them down.

The longer we observed these unsuccessful efforts, the clearer became the conviction in us, that our tirailleur fire, spite of its briskness, was far from sufficient to disconcert, to the degree re-

quired for the success of the storming, the most obstinate defenders of the breach, the forces of the Weissenburg rondel. Here it was necessary to help with artillery. The breach-battery, and the dismounting one to the right of it, received orders to open their fire against the Weissenburg rondel, but in such a manner, that the projectiles might pass over it as close as possible. We promised ourselves from the imposing noise of the solid bullets rushing in quick succession over the heads of the men of the Weissenburg rondel, a far more favorable success for the assailants than from the musketry of our sharp-shooters, murderous though it was.

In consequence of the considerable distance of the breach-battery from the head-quarters, a good while elapsed before this order could be carried into effect; and we could distinctly remark in the meanwhile, that the continued attempts at storming, undertaken time after time with evidently less strength, grew ever more unsuccessful.

But as soon as these batteries began to play, the sinking courage of our troops seemed suddenly to revive. The next assault, essayed with visibly greater energy, brought the larger half of the then storming party on to the rampart. The Weissenburg rondel now lay to the left behind them; they turned to the right and very soon disappeared in the still-impenetrable shade of the dark walls of some half-finished houses situated not far from the breach.

Painful uncertainty seized us as to the fate of these brave fellows.

A second attempt to storm, with almost as favorable and enigmatical an issue, and even a third, succeeded the first at short intervals. After the last, however, an inexplicable standstill suddenly took place. The breach was no longer stepped upon—and nevertheless, as nearly as we could calculate, scarcely more than half a battalion could have reached the rampart. It seemed as if the combat, just at the moment when it began to take a more favorable turn for the assailants, had been basely given up by them. Anxiously we endeavored to discover, in the proximity of the breach, still but very faintly illumined, some particular cause for this sorrowful change of affairs.

The fire from the Weissenburg rondel—thanks to the activity of our breach and dismounting-batteries—had rather slackened



than increased, though it still continued pretty uninterruptedly. But otherwise not one of the garrison was visible on the rampart next the breach; only at some distance south of it, we thought we remarked a hostile troop, which seemed to assemble just then on the rampart, in order to advance directly to the breach and again occupy its apparently abandoned proximity. Yet, though we watched it a long time, we could not perceive that it gained ground toward the breach. At first we took this for a favorable sign, supposing that those of our troops who had previously mounted the breach had not succumbed, and were now preventing this troop from advancing on the rampart toward the breach. But along the whole extent of the rampart as far as the breach not a single shot had been fired; and judging from the immobility of this troop, attacks with the bayonet were out of the question.

The increasing daylight at last explained all contradictions. That troop on the rampart was assembled round the tricolor banner of a Honvéd battalion! It consisted in part of those brave fellows who had previously mounted the breach, and had there found a tenable spot; in part of those who had preferred to escalate by means of ladders the "terraced enclosure," rather than make further attempts to gain the rampart by the breach. But the escalate—rendered difficult by the fire of the Weissenburg rondel also, though, on account of the greater distance, in a less degree than mounting the breach, and moreover confined at the uppermost wall to a single ladder—furnished only a very feeble afflux of fresh forces for the reinforcement of that isolated troop on the rampart.

The apprehension of seeing these give way before the desperate attacks of the garrison, if the escalate on the Vienna front and the storm on the intrenchments before the forcing-pump should now be suddenly abandoned, as it was already day, and these undertakings had not yet succeeded—induced me speedily to send two officers from the head-quarters to the third corps and the Kmety division, to convey to them the encouraging news of the success of the first corps, and communicate to them at the same time a strict order for the increasingly energetic continuance of their attacks.

This measure, however, was soon seen to be superfluous. The two officers could scarcely have got half way from the head-quarters to the Vienna suburb, when we saw the first escaladers

of the third corps on the rampart of the Vienna front, advancing toward the angle formed by it and the Weissenburg front; the Croats, on the contrary, who had defended this point, retreating into the interior of the fortress.

Soon afterward, the sign of submission—an off-hand white banner—waved from one of those traverses on the Weissenburg rampart, which had been thrown up to protect the four twenty-four-pounders planted there against our breach-battery.

But the waving of this banner did not in the least prevent the defenders of the Weissenburg rondel from continuing their fatal fire against the escaladers of the first corps on the terraced inclosure, as briskly as was practicable, considering the activity of our tirailleurs and batteries directed against them; and so long as this lasted, we had of course to take no notice at all of this sign of submission; the less so, as it had accidentally escaped our observation by *whom* the white banner had been set up. The *anonymous* "entreaty for pardon" might have originated only from a peaceful citizen of Ofen, whose house chanced to be situated in one and the same direction with the Weissenburg rondel and our breach-battery, by the bullets from which it was perhaps being roughly handled.

After a while, however, one of the garrison suddenly approached the traverses, seized the banner, and bore it with unsteady steps to the Weissenburg rondel.

Arrived there, he planted it on the parapet.

This seemed to some among the defenders of this point a welcome pretext for desisting from further resistance. The greater part continued to fire. Moreover, a few moments later, an officer appeared on the rondel, approached the parapet, tore down the sign of submission, and threw it on the ground. But scarcely had he retired, when the banner waved anew over the parapet. And now the idea of submission seemed to have the majority of the defenders in its favor; for only some of them still fired occasionally. These also at last laid down their arms. Our batteries and tirailleurs ceased their fire; and while the latter mounted the Weissenburg rondel by means of ladders, the majority of the battalion of the first corps had already forced their way from the point where they had gathered on the rampart, south of the breach, into the interior of the town, and the last desperate combat had now commenced in the streets. This, however, we

were prevented from observing by the range of houses along the rampart of the Weissenburg front: we saw only the smoke of the enemy's guns spreading over the roofs.

Almost simultaneously a cloud of powder-smoke of uncommon extent rose on the other side of the fortress. This had been aimed at the chain-bridge! But the irrational intention had been frustrated by the injudicious nature of the mine, which was designed to blow in pieces the gigantic chains of the bridge.

Half an hour afterward I received General Nagy-Sándor's report, that the fortress together with the garrison—Major-general Hentzi mortally wounded—was completely in our power.

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## CHAPTER LII.

ABOUT noon of the 4th of May, Ofen was invested by us, and not till the morning of the 21st did we gain possession of the place; we had consequently employed almost seventeen entire days in its conquest.

The chief causes of this loss of time, by no means unimportant to us, were, next to the firmness of the hostile garrison, the want of all preparation for the operations of a siege, which had unexpectedly proved necessary; our mistakes during the siege; our deficiency of besieging-artillery; and moreover the unseasonable scruples—to choose the mildest expression—of the commander of the fortress of Komorn, Count Guyon.

It can not be denied, that the fortress of Ofen, from the method of defense adopted by Major-general Hentzi, must have been in our possession at furthest within eight days, if, instead of the preconceived opinion of being able to conquer it by mere attacks with infantry and howitzers, I had at once brought with me the besieging-park from Komorn, had prepared beforehand the requisites for the construction of batteries, and with more circumspection and equal energy had set about the construction of the batteries themselves. For the method in which Major-general Hentzi conducted the defense seemed to be based on the peculiar illusion, that the longer maintenance of a besieged strong place depended



not so much on the energetic impediments thrown in the way of the besiegers' operations, as on the amount of devastation committed on some point *beyond the offensive range*.

Instead of hindering, at any sacrifice, the construction of our batteries, without the completion of which we should have been confined exclusively to the escalade—certainly very precarious, considering the valor of the garrison—Major-general Hentzi used exclusively for the repeated bombardments of Pesth those colossal means, of the possession of which he had with good reason boasted in his reply to my summons to surrender.

While on our part the intrenchments at the Spitzbergel were carried on uninterruptedly under his very eyes, though with evident helplessness, and one half of the guns employed in those bombardments would have sufficed to frustrate the erection of the breach-battery; Major-general Hentzi was, above all, solicitous for the demolition of the deserted House of Representatives, and amused himself, by the way, in changing into ruins and ashes some dozens of houses happening to belong to thoroughly excellently-disposed black-and-yellow Pesth citizens; till, at last, the cannibal personal gratification arising from the further repetition of similar experiments was embittered to him by the thundering *memento mori* of our breach-battery, which had meanwhile been completed.

Not till his foot was already excoriated, did Major-general Hentzi seem to observe where the shoe really pinched him.

From this time, it is true, we see him do every thing in his power subsequently to raze the parapets, the construction of which he had taken *en bagatelle*; subsequently to silence the guns, the planting of which in the batteries he had not even attempted to prevent; subsequently we see him undertake, with surprising energy, and unceasingly continue the construction of defensive works, which he ought to have begun on the first day of the siege.

But these gigantic efforts had only the usual result of all "*subsequents*." They came too late. Those days on which they ought to have been made, Major-general Hentzi thought he must devote exclusively to the bombardment of Pesth.

And now that they were past, that is, when our twenty-four-pounders were already in activity, he could no longer prevent us from effecting a breach; nay, even the most desperate resist-

ance of the garrison could not then retard the fall of the fortress, which, considering our want of means and our helplessness during the siege, might still be said to be premature.

The above-described defense of Ofen was enfeebled, in spite of all its valor, by the prevalence of a destructive rage, ascribable only to political fanaticism, but just as foolish as absolutely detestable.

The bombardments of Pesth were, I repeat it, by no means justifiable in any point of view. Not politically; because the Pesth "landlords," as has been said, were neither Kossuthians nor republicans. And just as little strategically: for these bombardments (apart from what has already been said against them) did not even accomplish their object as repressive measures; as such they should have induced us to give up the siege immediately, and march off straightway.

This, however, by no means took place; and with a calm estimate of the then state of the specifically-Austrian cause in Hungary, might have been foreseen on the part of the enemy (even if no importance at all was attached to the categorical tone of my summons to surrender) with just as little difficulty as the dangerous exasperation, which, in consequence of these devastations of the city of Pesth, must seize upon our ranks against their originators.

Considering all this beforehand, I had asked Major-general Hentzi to spare the city of Pesth and the chain-bridge, under the assurance that he had no attack whatever to apprehend from the left bank of the Danube. I had simultaneously guaranteed to him and to his troops, even if they should defend themselves to the last, a humane treatment, provided these objects, which were *innocuous to the garrison*, were spared.

The bombardments of Pesth showed clearly enough that no regard was paid to humane considerations; and I immediately issued an *express prohibition* to all the divisions of the besieging army against giving quarter to the garrison. But on the capture of its commander I set an especial price: for I intended to make an example of him, as a warning to those who have an itching for *purposelessly* augmenting the horrors of war.

Major-general Hentzi fell mortally wounded into *my* power; with the dying man a HIGHER power was already reckoning.

The garrison was not put to the sword. Let it be thankful to

*those officers who, in part, have since expired on the scaffold, in part are languishing in the state-prisons of Austria ; let it hold the memory of its noble-minded enemies in honor !*

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### CHAPTER LIII.

ABOUT the middle of the month of April, 1849, as is known from what precedes, while the main body of our principal army was on its march from Waizen toward Lévenecz, an expeditionary column, composed of six companies of infantry, one squadron of hussars, and two six-pounders, under the command of the Honvéd Major Armin Görgei, was detached into the district of the mountain-towns to purge them from the Austrian garrisons ; and thus protect the rear of the main body of our army during its further advance against Komorn.

On the 18th of April, Major Görgei began the fulfillment of his mission by taking Schemnitz by storm. The hostile soldiers, who on this occasion became our prisoners, stated that the strength of the Austrian column, distributed in the district of the mountain-towns, consisted of ten companies of infantry and two pieces of artillery.

The commander of these troops (Major Trenk) stood on that day with a part of them in Neusohl.

At the first news of the expulsion of his troops from Schemnitz, Major Trenk evacuated the district of the mountain-towns without further opposition, and concentrated his forces near Szent-Márton, in the Turóc comitate, which it bounds on the north.

Major Görgei pressed forward on the shortest route (by Kremnitz) toward Szent-Márton. Simultaneous reconnoiterings on the part of the Austrian and Hungarian columns led to a conflict at Pribócz in the night between the 22d and the 23d. The Hungarian advanced troops were victorious ; and Major Trenk now retreated through the Sztrecsen defile, and across the Waag as far as Varin on the right bank of that river.

At the same time the Sclavonian free-corps were roving about



in the Liptau comitate. They had been expelled from Eperjes in the second half of the month of March by the expeditionary column which had been detached from the seventh army corps, then acting independently, and sent from Miskolcz against them. This is the expeditionary column which subsequently surprised the Austrian Colonel Almásy in Lossoncz. These free-troops now intended undoubtedly to join the Austrian Major Trenk in Varin, by Alsó-Kubin, Párnicza, and Terhova.

But a company of Major Görgei's expeditionary column—which had, in the mean time, crossed the Waag at Szucsán—overtook and attacked them on the 28th, not far from Alsó-Kubin, made about 160 of them prisoners, and put the remainder to flight toward Tverdossin. The captured free-troopers were disarmed and sent away to their homes.

Major Görgei now hastened against Major Trenk in Varin by the same route as that on which he had perhaps expected to be joined by the Slavonian free-corps. The attack on Varin took place on the 1st of May. Major Trenk was defeated, and on the 2d was pursued, by Budetin, as far as Radolya, on the road to Jablunka.

Before it was possible to overtake him, Major Görgei received news that Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel, coming from the Zips, with from 6000 to 7000 men and eighteen guns, had broken into the Liptau.

In consequence of this information, the further pursuit of Major Trenk was abandoned; and by the 4th of May our expeditionary column was already in Szent-Miklós in the Liptau, partly to impede the advance of Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel as much as possible; partly, in the last extremity, to protect the road from Rosenberg to Neusohl.

To retard the westward advance of these hostile forces in the valley of the Waag, seemed to be demanded by the natural supposition, that Lieutenant-general Dembinski—who, it is known, had been intrusted, soon after his removal from the chief command, with the charge of an army corps, newly formed in Eperjes and Kaschau, and had occupied the Zips before the irruption into it of Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel—was now pursuing the latter. This supposition was, however, any thing but natural in the case of Dembinski. As far as my knowledge of him went, Dembinski, as soon as he scented the enemy *a-head*,

had always without exception moved back. So also this time. Instead of pursuing Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel, Dembinski barricaded himself in the Sáros comitate against that of Zips; while Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel left the latter in an opposite direction, probably for the purpose of reaching on the shortest line the left wing of the Austrian main army on the central Waag.

This shortest line led, indeed, through the district of the mountain-towns. Our expeditionary column, which had destroyed the bridges over the Waag between Szent-Miklós and Rosenberg, and occupied the defile at the latter place, was nevertheless sufficient to determine Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel, by turning northward from Szent-Miklós, to pass the territory between the rivers Waag and Arva on mountain-ways practicable only with extreme difficulty, and to accomplish his strategic task on the road from Alsó-Kubin by Varin, Silein (Zsolna,) and Trencsin; while our expeditionary column, flanking his left, continually protected the district of the mountain-towns.

Meanwhile we perceived the disproportion between the great extent of the district to be protected and the small strength of the expeditionary column; and from the camp of Ofen six companies of infantry, half a squadron of hussars, and two three-pounders, were sent to it as a reinforcement.

When this reinforcement reached the expeditionary column, Field-marshal Lieut. Vogel had already effected his junction with the Austrian main army.

To form the extreme left wing of the latter seemed at the same time to have been assigned to the independent brigade of Major-general Barko, which, coming from Silesia, broke into Hungary through the Jablunka defile, and advanced toward Silein on the Waag.

At the time of the fall of Ofen our now reinforced expeditionary column was just about assuming the offensive against this hostile brigade; while the other expeditionary column from the seventh army corps, which, as is known, had shortly before the relief of Komorn been detached to Verebely, had advanced from this point as far as Neutra, for the purpose of occupying the hostile forces distributed on the central Waag, and thereby favoring the undertakings of Major Görgei against the Barko brigade.

Pöltenberg had stood with his two army divisions of the seventh corps in and before Raab since the beginning of May,

but little disturbed by the Austrians; and a part of the garrison of Komorn at the same height in the great Schütt.

Kossuth's previous assurances (at the beginning of April, in Gödöllö), that Lieutenant-general Bem would cross the Danube at Baja with 16,000 men in the second half of April, had not been confirmed. Even in May, Bem was only at Temesvár; and the Ban Baron Jellachich consequently reached the right bank of the Drau without molestation.

While I purposed resuming the offensive against the Austrian main army immediately after the fall of Ofen, a plan of operations was drawn up by my substitute in the war-ministry, General Klapka, the fundamental idea of which for the war-operations was, that we should observantly await the irruption of a Russian army into Hungary, now thought probable even by the provisional government; and moreover having as its intention to subordinate all the leaders of Hungarian troops in Hungary and Transylvania to the control of the ministry of war. This plan owed it to the latter intention, and not to its idea for the war-operations, that I did not reject it at the outset, but only afterward practically disavowed its fundamental idea of operations by my disposal of the troops, which was intended to render possible the renewal of the offensive against the Austrian main army before the invasion of the Russians.

Immediately after the fall of Ofen, accordingly, the first, second, and third army corps were directed from the camp at Ofen, by Gran, to the left bank of the Danube, toward the lower Waag; but on the right bank only the Kmety division, by Stuhlweissenburg, toward the territory situated between the Platten and the Neusiedel lakes.

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## CHAPTER LIV.

DURING the siege of Ofen, and shortly before the failure of the first general assault—about the middle of the month of May—General Klapka, leaving Debreczin for some days, suddenly arrived at my head-quarters on the great Schwabenberg; partly that



he might convince himself personally of the progress of the siege ; partly that he might communicate to me the most important points of what he had at present learned, during the short time of his occupation as war-minister, about certain circumstances which had remained unknown to us who were with the army. These were, the relation in which the most important war-supplies and the resources of the country stood to the development of greater forces in the field, generally recognized as indispensable,—that of the war-ministry to Kossuth,—of Kossuth to the Diet.

The resources of the country General Klapka described as insufficient for energetically carrying on the war even for half a year longer. Apart from the financial difficulty, which was moreover no secret to the army, Klapka pointed especially to the circumstance, that the supplies of gunpowder and of saltpetre were not enough for even the complete equipment of the fortresses which were in our power ; and that the manufactories of arms furnished but a small part of what the government had publicly announced they were capable of producing.

General Klapka on that occasion declared undisguisedly his sorrowful conviction, that the salvation of Hungary was impossible without foreign assistance, and that this would be probable only if we succeeded in resisting the combined attacks of the Austrians and Russians—of the intervention of the latter he doubted just as little as myself—until the end of next autumn ; because in consequence of the prevailing peculiarities of this season of the year in by far the greater part of Hungary, a suspension of operations on the part of the hostile armies would be unavoidable, and the continuance of the resistance until the next spring be facilitated to us, and thereby the necessary time be secured to induce foreign countries to take part with Hungary.

The principal condition—Klapka thought further—for a resistance as successful as these conjectures presupposed it to be, was, above all things, union in the conduct of the operations of all parts of the national army, isolated from each other. Recognizing this, he had directed his activity hitherto, as my substitute in the war-ministry, especially to the attainment of this indispensable unity.

Unfortunately he had encountered herein almost insuperable difficulties.

These consisted partly in the circumstance that the majority of the independent commanders of troops in their operations had been accustomed to take not the slightest notice of the general purpose, and completely to ignore the decrees of the war-ministry; and partly in Kossuth's habit, without the knowledge of the war-minister, of constantly exercising on the operations of some of the independent leaders a direct influence, almost always as injurious to the progress of our cause in the field as it was partial, whereby these leaders were of course encouraged in their disobedience to the war-minister.

On this occasion General Klapka spoke very unfavorably of Kossuth generally. With lively indignation he blamed, among other things, especially the intention of Kossuth, and of those who sided with him, to exterminate completely the Serbians (*i. e.* the Schokazen and Raizen) in the Banat and the Bácska, and, without more ado, colonize the districts thus depopulated with Honvéd battalions.

Finally, the new law of the kingdom of the 14th of April, and especially the manner in which it had been originated, Klapka condemned most unsparingly. He described the real creators of this law, in expressions by no means honorable to them, as men who had never made any sacrifice for the good of the country, and who in general had scarcely any thing to lose. While those who were in all respects the most estimable patriots—asseverated Klapka—men who had already really made the most important sacrifices for the salvation of Hungary, and among these a very considerable part of the representatives, were without exception decided adversaries of this law.

Two or three weeks previous to the time at which this conference between General Klapka and myself took place in the camp before Ofen, a private letter from the then government commissary (afterward minister of communication) Ladislaus Csányi, had reached me in Komorn (before the complete relief of this fortress), wherein he declared to me, that he could countenance the separation of Hungary from Austria only because Kossuth had assured him by letter that it had my entire approval.

Now as Kossuth, when he wrote in the sense just indicated to the government commissary Ladislaus Csányi, could not possibly have forgotten my decided disapprobation of his intention (communicated to me, as is known, in Gödöllő, after the battle of

Isaszeg) to venture on a politically offensive step against Austria, and consequently could not feel himself justified even in *assuming* my sympathy for the decision of the Diet of the 14th of April;—it may be conceived, that by Csányi's letter alone I must have been rendered suspicious of the *purity* of the manner in which the decision of the 14th of April had been obtained.

The above-mentioned communications of Klapka, as to the existence of a numerous weighty party in the Diet, which, though not approving of the law of the 14th of April, had nevertheless voted for it, now confirmed the suspicion which had been awakened in me by Csányi's letter; while, again, the credibility of *these* communications (from my entire confidence in Csányi's strict probity and love of truth, the result of my personal conviction,) found a strong support in *this* letter.

I consequently declared that I perfectly agreed with the proposal, which Klapka made to me in the course of our conference, to open the way to a reciprocal approximation between the adversaries of the new Hungarian law and the army; and learned with thankful acknowledgment, from Klapka's further communications, that during his short stay in Debreczin he had already taken the initiative to such an approximation, and had assured the most eminent persons of the said party (the so-called "peace-party") not only of my personal sympathy, but moreover of that of the whole main army for them (the adversaries of the new law). Nay, I most urgently exhorted Klapka to continue his activity in this direction immediately after his return to Debreczin;—and this after he had shown me the contradiction between the aversion of the peace-party to the new law, and their co-operation in the decision of the 14th of April, by revealing to me that the members of the Diet belonging to the peace-party had been shaken in their resolute opposition to the proposed declaration of independence, partly by Kossuth's assertion, that *the army* so eagerly desired the separation of Hungary from Austria, that the proclamation of it, should the Diet delay any longer, was to be apprehended from the army; partly by the intimidating demeanor of the population of Debreczin, fanaticized by Kossuth and his agents for the idea of the total defection from Austria.

I had hitherto considered the new Hungarian law of the 14th of April—in my ignorance of the circumstances under which it saw the light—to have been the result of a resolution of the



whole Diet, which, though inconsiderate, or originating in deception, was nevertheless a voluntary one. And because such a resolution could by no means be made to harmonize with those communications which Kossuth (in the beginning of March, 1849, in Tiszafüred) had made to me upon the unceasing demand of *the very same* Diet for unconditional submission to the power of Prince Windischgrätz, without at the same time assuming the existence of some contrary sudden impulse; I had hitherto supposed that the exasperation, which had seized the collective body of the Hungarian representatives at the Olmütz stroke of policy, had been so extremely intense, as—in conjunction with the national arrogance, which had perhaps been inflamed by the surprisingly favorable progress of the April campaign—to have sufficed to call into existence the law of the 14th of April.

But with this supposition, I could not deny that the law, in spite of all the irrationality contained in it, had a *nimbus* of the national will; and however injurious in its consequences (more to Hungary than to Austria) this law might appear to me, the secretly hostile position which I took up against it was rendered very painful to me by the idea, that with the Diet, the whole nation, as it were, was opposed to me.

Only in consequence of Klapka's intimation of the manner in which this law originated (the first intimation moreover which I had received of it), I began to feel my hostile position to it becoming by degrees more bearable, in the same measure as my conviction increased that the law of the 14th of April had not been desired by the nation, but was the handiwork of Kossuth, and forced upon it by him.

The sensible loss of seventeen days before Ofen; the supposition unfortunately only too well founded, that the Austrians might have meanwhile pretty well recovered from the stunning blows of the April campaign, and that they might, moreover, have considerably strengthened their main army in Hungary by drafting thither all their forces not required elsewhere; the statements of Klapka as to our insufficiency in the most essential war-supplies;—all this was certainly very unfavorable to the possibility of realizing my idea, namely, to urge the provisional governments on this and the other side the Lajtha to a compromise, based on the constitution sanctioned in the year 1848, before the Russian intervention should actually begin.

But nevertheless I was forced to recognize in the serious attempt to carry out this idea—considering my grave doubts of the existence of an energetic European sympathy for Hungary's independence as a state—the only beam which might perhaps be still strong enough to reward the last convulsive clinging to it of the submerging.

And if I had not been deterred from the thought of an armed opposition to the new Hungarian law, at a time when I could not but believe that in such a step I should have the whole nation against me; then, I should suppose, it can not be necessary to detail the reasons which led me to persist in this thought, after Klapka's accounts had proved beyond doubt the existence of a numerous party in the country of the same political opinions as myself—a party which contained the majority of those who were acknowledged to be the most disinterested patriots.

A few days after the taking of Ofen, a deputation from the Diet appeared in Pesth for the purpose of rewarding me, in the name of the Diet and of the Government, for my services in the army of the fatherland, with the order of the *first* class of military merit, and the rank of Field-marshal Lieutenant.

I felt a repugnance to accept rewards from that party, the political acts of which I could not fail to perceive were injurious to the nation. But in order to mask as much as possible the real significance of my refusal, I began by stating it to the deputation of the Diet, and adduced as motives for my conduct, partly the statutes of the order of military merit, according to which the first class of these distinctions did not at all appertain to me; partly the incompatibility of the dignity of field-marshal lieutenant with the republican programme of government of the ministerial president Bartholomäus von Szemere.

In consequence of this, all official intercourse between me and the deputies ceased. I was, however, honored by their leaders with a private visit; and on this occasion became unexpectedly acquainted with two decided opponents to the new law.

These had probably perceived, in my refusal to accept the above-mentioned rewards, a confirmation of what had been told them by Klapka during his presence in Debreczin relative to my disapproval of the decree of the Diet of the 14th of April, and had thereby felt themselves encouraged to meet me with confidence.

They quite undisguisedly expressed their joy at the false posi-

tion in which I had placed the Government by my unexpected refusal of the distinctions intended for me ; confirmed and completed Klapka's former evidences of Kossuth's intrigues, by means of which he had brought about the declaration of independence ; and finally cautioned me against accepting the portfolio of war-minister, or, more correctly, they earnestly besought me *not to leave the army*.

Only so long as I actually stood at the head of the army—said they—could I reckon on its obedience, on its unreserved confidence—would my word have weight in the balance of public opinion—would it maintain its influence even with that large part of the nation which my personal enemies had set *against me*. This was just as little a secret to the leaders of the 14th of April party—the men of the Government—as was the danger by which their policy would be menaced if I took part against them. This was also the reason why the Government feared to transfer to me definitively the chief command of the army ; why it wished to remove me from the theatre of war ; and only that it might appear justified before the army in doing so, had it offered me the minister's portfolio.

I hereupon gave the two leaders of the deputation from the Diet the tranquilizing assurance that other additional circumstances obliged me still to retain the chief command.

I did not, however, communicate to them my previous determination to compel the Diet in due time by force of arms to annul the law of the 14th of April, because I had given up all thoughts of the execution of this determination as soon as the discovery of a weighty party in the Diet of the same political opinions as myself, led me to suppose it now possible to strive for the same object—which at first had seemed to me to be attainable only by the bayonet—with the observance at the same time of the constitutional forms, which had obtained in Hungary such general authority.

Moreover, the way in which this was forthwith to be attempted had not been at all discussed during the above-mentioned private visit, which the leaders of the deputation from the Diet paid me. I knew then that I should be at Debreczin in the course of a few days, and preferred to await the opportunity which would probably be offered to me there, of declaring openly before a larger number of members of the peace-party my views in relation to the present situation of Hungary.



## CHAPTER LV.

GENERAL AULICH immediately after the taking of Ofen, in consequence of an obstinate inward complaint, had applied for his dismissal into retirement.

General Damjanics was miserably laid up with his shattered leg.

All the other coryphæi of the army, except General Klapka, had been far too little tried as independent leaders to be confidently intrusted with the chief command. General Klapka, however, I could by no means wish at the head of the army, with my intention of resuming most energetically the offensive against the Austrians before the Russians should prevent us from doing so, after he had so decidedly declared himself for observing the defensive, in the general plan of operations projected by him, and approved by the council of ministers in Debreczin.

Under these circumstances I was constrained to retain the chief command of the army.

Not mistaking the weighty influence of the war-ministry upon the services and the political disposition of the army, I was, however, already convinced of the necessity of obstructing for ever the way in which Kossuth and those about him had hitherto known how to gain this influence; and unfortunately General Klapka, during the short time he had acted as my substitute in Debreczin, had justified in a very deplorable manner my apprehension that he might scarcely be equal to this task, on account of his being of too yielding a nature.

For I was one day surprised by the appointment of a sister of the Governor of Hungary as foster-mother-in-chief of the sick of the country; and moreover by a war-ministerial decree, signed by Klapka himself, which subordinated the authorities of all hospitals in the country, in all their administrative relations, to the immediate rule of the said foster-mother-in-chief of the sick of the country.

The aptitude of the fair sex for nursing the sick has hitherto, I should think, been denied by nobody; but "to nurse the sick" and "to organize and conduct the nursing of the sick of a whole

country, especially of an army during war," are certainly two different things. This could not have been unknown to General Klapka; but his moral strength, as above indicated, might have been insufficient to oppose, with the regard due to the fair sex, yet still with manly firmness, the administrative inclinations of a lady, which even with the best intentions were at any rate inopportune.

In consequence of this the war-ministry under Klapka had lost more of its independence in a few days than under Mészáros in months. It would indeed have been unjustifiable to intrust it any longer to a guidance, the weakness of which completely opened the door to the remarkable passion of Kossuth and those about him of both sexes for dabbling in the most important affairs of war, constantly with as much want of common sense as with excessive vanity. Klapka himself seemed to know this; for shortly after the fall of Ofen he declared that he found he was not at all in his element as war-minister, and wished to return to the active army.

As this moment, however, I knew of no disposable person whatever, to whom I could more satisfactorily have transferred my duties as war-minister than to General Klapka; and I was thus obliged for the present to take upon myself personally the war-ministry also, at least until I should see the possibility of confiding the principal direction of it to a substitute on whom I could rely.

Accordingly I went to Debreczin in the beginning of June, my personal presence with the army not being indispensable for the next few days in the present condition of affairs on the theatre of war.

The main army had lost in Generals Damjanics and Aulich its two best leaders.

After the taking of Ofen it was literally an orphan. At least I considered it so.

Neither Klapka's talents as a general, though extraordinary, nor my own efforts, appeared to me sufficient to make up for the heavy loss which the army had sustained in those two persons.

But to the new commanders of corps, Generals Nagy-Sándor and Knézich, to Colonel Pöltenberg, as well as to Aulich's successor in the command of the second army corps, Colonel Asbóth,

no opportunity had hitherto been afforded for trying their independent action before the enemy—either in critical moments on the field of battle, as in the case of Damjanics at Isaszeg and Nagy-Sárlo; or in accomplishing a strategic task alike perilous and decisively important, as was that of Aulich during the April campaign before Pesth.

And there was no reason to suppose that the offensive campaign against the Austrians, which I seriously intended, in spite of Klapka's plan of defensive operations, would be less fertile in similar critical moments and situations.

I was therefore obliged to decide *either* to open this campaign with the main body of the principal army concentrated under my personal command *on a single* line of operation, and to face at random its later critical phases with commanders of army corps as yet untried; *or* to break up the main body of the army corps, and attempt the opening of the campaign with distinct independent army corps *on several* lines of operation, for the purpose of discovering, at the very commencement of the campaign, those among the new commanders of army corps who might be qualified to compensate for Generals Damjanics and Aulich.

In accordance with the opinion of the chief of the general staff I chose the latter expedient.

According to this, our offensive against the Austrians—as we shall see afterward—was to begin with a combined attack of the independently-operating first, second, and third army corps on the hostile position at the Waag; and the reunion of these army corps, under my personal command, was not to take place till after the successful crossing of that river.

The seventh army corps, under Pöltenberg and Kmety, had meanwhile to demonstrate on the right bank of the Danube.

My task as commander-in-chief was consequently limited, during the first development of these offensive operations, to merely keeping an eye upon their unity.

I intrusted the fulfillment of this task to the chief of the general staff.

This convenient measure led to the establishment of a mobile central office of operations for all Hungary, and to an attempt at realizing my twofold intention—of bringing unity into the operations of all the national armies, and of putting an end to Kosuth's injurious influence on the progress of those operations.



This plan also enabled me to devote my personal exertions, during some days, exclusively to the management of the affairs of the war-ministry, without having to fear that any thing would thereby be neglected in the sphere of the operations of the main army ; for, on the one hand, the supposition was highly probable, that the Austrians—disconcerted by the defeats they had suffered during the April campaign—scarcely thought of daring an offensive step against us before the invasion of the Russians *en gros* ; on the other hand, in order to be able to commence the attack on the hostile position on the Waag with energy, the enemy's advanced troops had previously to be driven back from the left to the right bank of the Waag, and then the preparations, always lengthy, rendered necessary by our great want of the equipments for bridges, were to be made, which should render the intended crossing of the Waag in the face of the enemy possible by us. Both tasks, in my opinion, could scarcely be accomplished before the time when I intended to return from Debreczin. In case, however, during my absence of several days from the army, any unforeseen circumstances should occur on the theatre of war, the chief of the general staff was empowered to issue, according to his own judgment, to the separate army corps such especial dispositions as in consequence of these circumstances were necessary to be instantly taken ; all commanders of corps, divisions, and columns of the main army having been ordered to regard equally as my own the official signature of the chief of the general staff, who at the same time was chief of the mobile central office of operations.

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## CHAPTER LVI.

I HAD not been deceived in my expectation, that I should find an opportunity in Debreczin of expressing before several members of the peace-party my views on the consequences of the declaration of independence, as well as on the measures which should be taken without delay by all of us who did not agree to the separation of Hungary from Austria, whether on principle, or

merely on account of its results—in order to restore the constitution of 1848.

Scarcely had I arrived in Debreczin, when I received from one of the two representatives who in Ofen, a few days before, had warned me against accepting the portfolio of war, a pressing invitation to a confidential meeting with several who shared his political opinions.

This meeting accordingly took place on the very first evening after my arrival in Debreczin.

I was introduced by the representative alluded to into an assembly of from fifteen to twenty persons, who for the most part were unknown to me. Among those present with whom I had previously come in contact was Field-marshal Lieutenant Mészáros.

The majority of those present wished me to inform them, in the first place, what foundation there was for the intelligence, first brought to Debreczin by General Klapka, of the *prevalent* antipathy in the ranks of the main army to the declaration of independence.

Now this intelligence, when originally brought to Debreczin by General Klapka (in the beginning of May), was in so far really untenable as that the discontent with the declaration of independence had not then been predominantly observable in the *whole* of the main army, but only in a smaller part of it—the seventh army corps.

But since then—especially during the unwelcome leisure at the siege of Ofen—the officers who had previously been in the Austrian service, and who were naturally enemies to the declaration of independence, had been so successful in their propaganda against it in the other army corps also, that now, in the beginning of June, I could, without the slightest departure from truth, most decidedly corroborate Klapka's accounts—at all events anticipated in the beginning of May—of the prevalence in the ranks of the main army of sentiments opposed to the declaration of independence.

With equal decision I declared Kossuth's assertion, that the stroke of policy of the 14th of April had been desired by the army, to be untrue.

I ventured to declare this, not merely from the fact, that Kossuth, when he at first made known in Gödöllő his longing for a

political demonstration against the Olmütz octroyed constitution, was earnestly advised by me not to indulge this desire ; I asserted it on the well-grounded supposition that Kossuth had received no answer to his inquiries touching the seasonableness of making such a demonstration from *any* of the commanders of army corps then present in Gödöllő, which could have authorized him to conclude that the army wished, nay, positively demanded, the separation of Hungary from Austria.

*Not* from Damjanics ; because an expression which he made use of in my presence on the 20th April (the day after the battle of Nagy-Sarló)—“ he should really like to know how far the independent Debrecziners would have run, had the Austrians, instead of us, been victorious the day before ! ”—showed no particularly friendly feeling for the 14th of April.

*Not* from Klapka ; because he actually—as was again confirmed to me just now—had in set terms reproached some representatives on account of the 14th of April, even supporting his reproaches by vivid descriptions of the antipathy prevailing in the army to the declaration of independence.

Finally, *not* from Aulich, or the then commander of the seventh army corps ; because probably Kossuth had thought it superfluous to hear repeated twice over nearly the same answer as I had given him. For these two were under me while I was commander of the former corps d'armée “ of the upper Danube,” and in Kaschau took part in the known demonstration in my favor against Dembinski's being commander-in-chief. Now these antecedents could hardly have been unknown to Kossuth, and had most probably decided him not to ask the opinion of the two last-named commanders of army corps about the opportuneness of his longed-for demonstration, which was alike hostile to our constitution of 1848 and to that of the Olmütz octroyed.

It may still be objected, that Kossuth may have derived his conviction of the sympathy felt for his personal policy in the Hungarian army, concentrated in Gödöllő after the battle at Isaszeg, not from its leaders, but from the ranks of the different corps.

Indeed, it seems very likely that Kossuth, with sufficient leisure, might have succeeded in persuading the troops in Gödöllő to noisy manifestations of lively sympathy for something similar to the 14th of April ; just as he had once been successful, in the



camp at Parendorf, in agitating Móga's army, which was totally disinclined to carry offensive operations across the Lajtha, within a few days to diametrically opposite sentiments. The wish, repeatedly expressed by Kossuth, especially in Gödöllő, to pay familiar visits to the various army corps in their quarters, also clearly betrayed that he was preparing a second edition of the camp-speeches which were so successful in Parendorf.

But perhaps the anticipation of finding in Gödöllő, instead of the national guards and volunteers of the Parendorf camp, an audience that had already smelt powder, and the modest doubt of the success of his oratorical efforts before an audience of *that kind*, or—what is much more probable—the fear of my *contre-coup* had frightened him from his intention; suffice it to say, the confidential visits to the camp did not take place, and Kossuth restricted himself in Gödöllő solely to witnessing the third army corps defile before him on its march against Waizen (on the 8th or 9th of April).

There was, it is true, on this occasion an animated shout of "Long live Kossuth, the saviour of his country!" which repeatedly greeted him from the ranks of the troops as they passed. Yet rightly considered, *this very* shout ought, as its consequence, to have made him feel disgust at any further thought of the *coup d'état* of the 14th of April, doubtless at that time already planned, and should have determined him to sacrifice his personal policy for the salvation of the fatherland.

But scarcely any of these details were mentioned at my meeting with the members of the peace-party. The assembly showed that it had confidence in me; it seemed to place implicit faith in my simple assurance that the Diet had been mystified by Kossuth; it asked no proof of it.

I now advised the immediate abolition of the law of the 14th of April, in order to save Hungary from the Russian invasion, and consequently from certain destruction; but received for answer the comfortless news, that the Diet had already adjourned, and would not meet again in Pesth till the beginning of July.

Some of those present accompanied this information—perhaps unintentionally—by casual remarks, from which I thought I must infer that it would not be unwelcome to the peace-party, if in the meantime, the abolition of this law were to proceed from the army.

At a time when every conjuncture seemed to guarantee to its

realization eminently successful results, I had formed in my own mind the idea of the abolition, by means of a military *coup d'état*, of the Diet's resolution of the 14th of April.

This was, as is known, immediately after the complete relief of Komorn, and before the setting out of the main body of our principal army against Ofen, when the Austrian army was in full retreat; and the probability was undeniable, after a speedy reduction of the garrison of Ofen, of prosecuting the victory of the tri-color banner over the black-and-yellow flag as far as the Lajtha.

To the fortunate issue of the April campaign, as commander-in-chief of the main army, I was at that time indebted for an authority, the weight of which would have sufficed to counterbalance any political views opposed to mine prevailing in the country. After an equally fortunate May campaign, as far as the western boundaries of Hungary, I might have reckoned with perfect certainty on dispersing the whole of the party of the 14th of April by the simple proclamation: "The declaration of independence is invalid! The constitution of 1848 forever!"—if the army stood by me.

I leave it to the judgment of each individual to decide whether the main army would have stood by me or not.

Suffice it for me to affirm that, under the just-mentioned favorable conjunctures, I was firmly resolved, at my own risk, to dare the finishing stroke at the Diet's resolution of the 14th of April.

But the victorious advance of our main army as far as the Lajtha appeared to me the *indispensable condition*.

For the main army, in my opinion, needed this new confirmation of the renown of its arms, that its *nimbus* might secure to the said proclamation such a reception in the country as was necessary to frustrate every armed faction favorable to the declaration of independence.

The loss of time consequent upon the *regular siege* of Ofen, which had unexpectedly become necessary; the credible rumors of a considerable reinforcement of the Austrian main army having meanwhile taken place, and the threatening proximity of the Russians; Aulich's unavoidable retirement from the theatre of war; and Klapka's declared partiality for the defensive;—all this made the accomplishment of that "indispensable condition" extremely doubtful; while, at the same time, the discovery of

the peace-party, as well as the disclosure of the manner in which the Diet's resolution of the 14th of April originated, allowed me to hope that it might perhaps be set aside even in a regular parliamentary manner.

In consequence of this I relinquished the idea of the military *coup d'état* as absurd.

In concert with the peace-party, however, the taking up again of this idea seemed to me any thing but absurd ;—after that, through the unexpected adjournment of the Diet, the possibility of getting at the declaration of independence in a parliamentary way appeared to be postponed to a time long before which the Russians could already be in the country.

But as conjunctures had become meanwhile far more unfavorable, I wished that the peace-party might first calmly look in the face all the dangerous consequences to be anticipated from the realization of such an idea, before it declared itself in favor of it.

The remarks above referred to as cursorily dropped by some members of the peace-party during our conference, from which, as has been said, I thought I might infer the sympathies of the peace-party for the abolition of the new law of the Diet by means of a military counter-revolution, consequently induced me undisguisedly to discuss this step, together with its immediate probable results.

But scarcely had I begun to do so, when the assembly interrupted me with vigorous shouts of, "No military revolution! No government of the sabre!"

This was the *negative* result of my meeting with the men of the peace-party. I had expected a *positive* one, but in vain.

I entered the assembly full of joyous hopes. I left it undeceived.

I had confidently reckoned on finding the peace-party, though it had been obliged to yield by a bold stratagem of Kossuth's, still ready for action, and determined on a desperate counter-stroke. I found it entirely beaten out of the field, for the moment unfit for the contest, and apparently, even with reference to the later renewal of the struggle, without a firm resolve, without a definite plan. To me at least it had communicated neither. Possibly it may have omitted this only through excessive caution. This reserve, however, constrained me to suppose that the peace-party felt itself altogether too weak to resist successfully, either *in par-*



liament or *out* of it, its political opponents—the men of the 14th of April.

And so I could no longer remain in uncertainty as to the direction I had to give to my premeditated hostile activity against the continued existence of the new law of the Diet.

*In* parliament the peace-party had to be strengthened by the addition of new forces. To this end, the officers serving in the main army who had parliamentary qualifications, and on whose political sentiments I could rely, were urged to solicit most zealously their election as representatives for any places accidentally vacant.

*Out of* parliament I had to endeavor to deprive the party of the 14th of April of its most influential supporters. These were the leaders of the national forces isolated from the main army: Bem, Moritz Perczel, Dembinski, and besides, Count Guyon, commander of the fortress of Komorn.

These had to be removed from their posts, and the vacant commands intrusted to men from whom at the decisive moment I had no reason to fear opposition in support of the declaration of independence.

I could accomplish this, however, only as acting minister-of-war. The conviction of this fully determined me to overcome the moral aversion I felt to taking the oath to a law, the overthrow of which, even in the most favorable case, seemed indispensable to the salvation of the great cause of Hungary.

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## CHAPTER LVII.

THE political relationship between Kossuth's views relative to the conditions on which the stability of the liberty of Hungary depended (see Chapter XXXIV.) and the *coup d'état* of the 14th of April was not to be mistaken.

These views Kossuth had communicated to me in the beginning of March, 1849; at a time when the octroyed constitution of Olmütz could not yet be known of by us.

In the face of this fact, the assumption that the *coup d'état* of

Olmütz had been needed in order to call into existence that of Debreczin seemed untenable.

Kossuth might go on calling the latter a *constrained* demonstration against the former; I nevertheless remained convinced, that in Kossuth the embryo of the declaration of independence was already in a far-advanced state of development—only interrupted by Dembinski's unlucky *début* as commander-in-chief—when the octroyed constitution of Olmütz came into the world. I remained convinced of this, because those expressions of Kossuth in Tiszafüred (in the beginning of March, directly after Dembinski's removal) as to the necessity of making Poland free, that Hungary might remain and that Europe might become so, had been too surprising to me at the time for them to have slipped from my memory.

It is known that these expressions had been called forth by my endeavor seriously to warn Kossuth against any departure from the legal basis of our combat in self-defense.

As distinctive marks of Kossuth's political tendencies, they were even then sufficient to force me into the most decided opposition to him; but they seemed to sink down almost to the significance of an inoperative private opinion, when Kossuth directly after assured me that he held it to be the most sacred duty of all who meant honorably by the country to venture on no step, the consequences of which might increase the power of the common enemy of us all.

On this protestation I suppressed all apprehension that Kossuth could allow himself to be seduced by his private political views into any step hostile to the existing constitution.

This protestation of Kossuth's, however, was not sincerely meant; it belonged only to the category of those well-known means by which he knew how to prevent any reciprocal approach between the army and the peace-party, and subsequently to execute his *coup d'état*—means, the frequent employment of which especially characterized Kossuth's tactics with regard to his political adversaries.

The *coup d'état* of the 14th of April showed me, unfortunately too late, that where I had hitherto confided, there the most decided distrust would have been fitter.

At the same time I perceived that the result of this *coup d'état* was so palpably injurious to the just cause of Hungary, that I

could not but accuse the man who had introduced it, either of over-haste or of an inordinate striving after the attainment of predominating personal objects.

The accusation of over-haste appeared to me to be deprived of its force by the circumstance already mentioned, namely, that Kossuth, six weeks before the 14th of April, was already working at the political fundamental idea of this *coup d'état*; without taking into account the conference which he had with me in Gödöllő (a week before the 14th of April) about its opportuneness, or the motives which induced me decidedly to dissuade him on that occasion from any such step.

The other accusation, on the contrary, has first to be weakened. Until now, as far as I know, this has not yet been done.

Hereby, I should think, is sufficiently explained the essential difference in the personal relation between Kossuth and myself *after* and *before* the 14th of April.

*Before* that day I submitted my will with full confidence to Kossuth's influence.

The tactics of which Kossuth had hitherto made use against the peace-party and myself forced me to adopt the same tactics against him.

My entering the ministry was the first employment of these tactics.

That Kossuth did not trust me—in this I could not possibly be deceived. It is a philosophical necessity to mistrust him whose confidence we have abused.

He mistook, however, the real motives of the counter-stroke which he feared from me.

His supposition, that I opposed his policy only from personal rivalry, was my most powerful defensive and offensive ally against him.

He doubtless supposed, that only my personal vanity (the author of the proclamation of Waizen) had been wounded by his *coup d'état*.

He believed at the same time that by appointing me war-minister, he had hit upon the real soothing balm for the sensitive wound; and when I had actually accepted the portfolio of war, he falsely imagined that the wound was already in a fair way of being radically healed—that my opposition to the declaration of independence was completely removed.



How Kossuth reconciled with this illusion my refusal to accept the distinctions intended for me in consequence of the taking of Ofen, remains, however, inexplicable. But that he nevertheless did labor under such an illusion can not be denied, for the simple reason that he suffered the union of the powers of war-minister and of the chief command of the main army in my person—a union in the highest degree dangerous to his policy—till the moment when I myself perceived the necessity of delivering him from the bonds of that illusion.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

IMMEDIATELY after the relief of Komorn, I had proposed to Kossuth to remove the seat of government into that fortress. He answered, that the government could not expose itself to the risk of being blockaded by the enemy; it must always secure the possibility of exerting a direct influence on the parts of the country not yet occupied by the enemy's arms.

On my arrival in Debreczin, after the taking of Ofen, I now learned that the seat of government was about to be transferred to Pesth. I endeavored in vain to show Kossuth that circumstances were all against it; that the government, now that the demolition of the fortifications of Ofen was commenced, would be exposed to danger from the enemy in the capitals not less than in Debreczin.

The removal of the government to Pesth—Kossuth maintained on the contrary—was indispensable, principally because the capitals figure in the national traditions as the seat of the real rulers of Hungary. The inhabitants between Pesth and Debreczin had very strikingly shown to the government when fleeing last winter behind the Theiss, that with the traditional residence it had given up its right to their homage. The triumphal procession from Debreczin back to the capitals was intended to renew in the people this homage, which it had at that time refused to the government. The Hungarian was fond of pomp, and believed there was power only where he met with *pomp*. He (Kossuth),

in the consciousness of the victory they had gained, would everywhere harangue the people, and animate it to further glorious combats for its independence from Austria. Moreover—he remarked in conclusion—all the ministries had already packed up, and the most of them were by this time on their way thither. The Diet was adjourned, and summoned to Pesth for the beginning of July. A sudden change of these measures would make the triumphant conquerors suspected in the eyes of the people as fugitives again, would depress the public feeling, nay would soon spread terror and confusion throughout the country. He could not take upon himself the responsibility of the consequences of all this.

The ministries—that of war likewise—were in fact already occupied with their transference to the capitals when I arrived at Debreczin; and this circumstance alone convinced me of the uselessness of offering any further opposition to Kossuth's ardent longing for the solemn entrance into Pesth.

At the same time I was forced to suppose it was solely out of eager desire for the satisfaction of this longing, that Kossuth had been so strongly bent upon the taking of Ofen, as even to side with me against Guyon, in order to render the regular siege of that place possible.

My intention of removing Generals Bem, Perczel, and Dembinski from the army, seemed to be practicable—without rousing Kossuth's suspicions against me—only with his personal assent and co-operation. In order to secure this, he had to be convinced of the indispensable necessity for bringing these commanders of troops again under the authority of the ministry of war.

He seemed to enter into my views; but strove in many ways against their consequences. Whether merely out of mistrust of me, or from dread of those persons, could not be known with certainty. Probably both reasons lay at the bottom of the difficulties which Kossuth raised against the energetic coercion of these generals, especially of Bem.

It is true he himself complained of the latter's dissipation of money, of his disturbing encroachments on the administration of the country, the arbitrary reduction in the price of salt in the country of the Szekler, the forcible transference of families of Hungarian peasants into Wallachian places (after their original inhabitants had been driven out)—measures such as were not even permitted to him (Kossuth) without the previous consent of

the Diet, and which betrayed clearly enough Bem's inclination to play the sovereign in Transylvania. In spite of this—Kossuth thought—he was obliged seriously to dissuade from any energetic steps against Bem, because he had threatened to resign the chief command of the army in Transylvania the moment any of his measures were disavowed ; but that to him Bem's remaining at his post seemed to be indispensable to the maintenance of Transylvania.

I saw that, with these views of Kossuth's about Bem, I ran the risk of falling into open conflict with him, if I insisted on the application of stringent measures against Bem. The necessity for giving way to Kossuth in this case, in order the more certainly to gain him for the steps I intended to take against Perczel and Dembinski, appeared to me indispensable. I accordingly promised Kossuth to leave to him alone the regulation of all those administrative affairs in which contests were to be feared between the war-ministry and Bem, and contented myself for the present with frustrating his intention of transferring to Field-marshal Lieut. Bem, besides the chief command over the army in Transylvania, also that over the troops of Generals Count Vécsey and Perczel, which were separately operating in the Banat and the Bácska.

The possibility of so frustrating this intention of Kossuth's, as that he not only did not guess the real tendency of the measure, but moreover must have felt himself obliged to me, was presented by the following circumstances.

Field-marshal Lieut. Vetter, still the really appointed commander-in-chief of the main army, had, as is known, fallen seriously ill just before the commencement of the April campaign ; but in the course of the campaign—during the first half of the month of April—he felt his health already sufficiently re-established to enable him to resume the command of the main army. He also prepared without delay for so doing, and informed Kossuth of it ; who had, however, in the mean time entertained the apprehension, that a sudden change in the chief command of the army might disturb the successful progress of the campaign, and used various means to hinder Vetter's departure for the main army, until the siege of Ofen. During it Vetter at last, it is true, arrived in the sphere of the main army ; he did not, however, avail himself of his rights as its commander-in-chief, but staid, as I heard, by turns in Pesth and in Gödöllő. Not till after the



fall of Ofen did a reciprocal explanation—an oral one—take place between him and me. He declared, that now that the main army had become accustomed to consider *me* as its commander-in-chief, he no longer thought of pressing his claims to this post, but said that he demanded from me, the future minister of war, a compensation for the injury which had been done to his public honor by Kossuth's intriguing against his re-entering on the active duties of commander-in-chief—that is, his appointment to a post corresponding to the rank with which he had been invested.

This request of Vetter's seemed to me not only very reasonable, it was besides most agreeable to me, in order that I might profit by the embarrassment into which Kossuth had brought himself with respect to Vetter, and give him the means of reconciling him—justly exasperated at having been, to say the least, undeservedly slighted—by nominating him commander-in-chief of the army in the Bácska and the Banat.

Kossuth signed the decree for Vetter's nomination most willingly. He seemed in fact to have no presentiment of the real extent of my proposal; it appeared rather as if he felt himself greatly obliged to me for the excellent opportunity I had afforded him of repairing the wrong he had done to Vetter.

Simultaneously with this affair I pursued the strict submission of Generals Perczel and Dembinski to my orders as war-minister. The strong aversion of both of them to recognize a superior military authority, added to the any thing but friendly personal relations in which both stood to me, led me confidently to anticipate that the consequential execution of these measures would of itself be sufficient soon to render insupportable to them the further remaining at their posts. Nevertheless both showed more tenacity than I had expected. Both must be removed. Kossuth seemed fortunately to be much less convinced that they were indispensable in the field than he was in the case of Field-marshal Lieut. Bem.

In the removal of Guyon from the command of the fortress of Komorn I had far less difficulty. For it so happened that Klapka in person asked this post for himself in conjunction with the chief command over three army corps, and seemed also to be quite equal to it; while Guyon's well-nigh proverbial small stock of military knowledge stood in a tragi-comical disproportion

to the duties devolving on the commander of a fortress. Accordingly, almost as a matter of course, the command of the fortress of Komorn was taken from Count Guyon, and intrusted to General Klapka; while Guyon was appointed commander of the corps of reserve which was just about being raised.

Kossuth had nothing to object to this change in the command of the fortress of Komorn; the more warmly, on the other hand, did he declaim against Guyon's being placed with the reserve. It was unjustifiable—he said—to employ the brave lion-hearted general in the reserve, when his place should be in the foremost line of the army; unjustifiable certainly to derive no advantage from powers like Guyon's just at the moment when the danger of the country appeared to be increasing threefold.

Nevertheless Guyon—the zealous repeater of Kossuth's political confession of faith of the 14th of April—remained with the reserve. Even had his political opinion been the reverse of what it was, he would not have escaped the reserve; for it seemed to me dangerous to intrust an *independent* command, in the face of the enemy to a general who, as experience showed, had his heart indeed in the right place, but not his head.

While I was endeavoring, in the manner above described, to purge the army from those partisans of the 14th of April who were at that time known to me, and were, as I believed, not to be too lightly regarded, I was surprised by the news of an event which deeply moved the army, nay the whole nation.

The Austrian Master of the Ordnance, Baron Haynau, the successor of Baron Welden in the chief command of the hostile army, announced to us the beginning of his activity in his new sphere by some executions. Two Hungarian officers, Ladislaus Baron Mednyánszky and Philip Gruber, prisoners, also fell a sacrifice to it.

## CHAPTER LIX.

LADISLAUS BARON MEDNYANSZKY and Philip Gruber had belonged to the garrison of the fort of Leopoldstadt, on the Waag. The fort, after a short bombardment, was surrendered in the

beginning of February, 1849, to the besieging Field-marshal Lieutenant Simunich. Mednyánszky and Gruber—as I afterward learned—are said to have been the only men who declared themselves against this act. For this reason, after being made prisoners, their lot was a much harder one than that of their comrades. A court-martial sentenced both to death.

This happened while Prince Windischgrätz held the chief command in Hungary. But neither he nor his immediate successor, Baron Welden, had this sentence carried into effect.

Only Baron Haynau did this. Mednyánszky and Gruber were hanged at Presburg in the fifth month of their captivity; after the rumors about their sentence being commuted to several years' imprisonment in a fortress had gained credit, and were rendered probable on many accounts, but chiefly by the unusual delay in the execution of the sentence.

These executions appeared to be not sufficiently justified by that act alone which was imputed to the condemned as a crime, after pardon had previously been granted to so many Hungarian officers taken with arms in their hands, who had formerly been in the Austrian service. They were intelligible at all, only if we either assume that Baron Haynau has inherently a peculiar predilection for such proceedings, and that these executions consequently stand in immediate connection with himself, and would not have taken place under another commander-in-chief; or if we admit that they must be considered as repressive measures on the part of the Austrian government against the decision of the Hungarian Diet of the 14th of April. In the latter case, it had evidently the appearance as if Mednyánszky and Gruber, though made prisoners by the Austrians in the beginning of February, had nevertheless been executed as accomplices of those men who full ten weeks later put the royal imperial dynasty of Habsburg-Lorraine under the Hungarian imperial ban.

The exasperation against Austria reached, in consequence of these executions, the culminating point.

I had—as is known—before the 14th of April, in a letter to Prince Windischgrätz, threatened that for every captive Hungarian officer put to death three Austrian officers should be sacrificed.

Kossuth in the name of the nation, and Klapka in the name of the army, now demanded of me that I should without delay execute this menace.



If I did, I must in future and forever abandon my endeavors to thwart the Russian invasion by the abolition of the Debreczin declaration of independence and the tentative preparation for an agreement with Austria. But every higher motive to induce me to do this was wanting; since I had become convinced that the declaration of independence had no more in common with the will of the Hungarian nation, than a private pleasure of Kossuth's had with its welfare.

I consequently refused to execute this threat, and continued undisturbed my endeavors in the direction indicated, even when—on account of the general exasperation at the first-fruits of Baron Haynau's doings in Hungary, as well as on account of the feeling of invincibility probably as general—there were indeed scarcely more than timid sympathies to be expected for the idea of a return to the constitution of the year 1848, connected as it was prospectively with considerable sacrifices.

I prosecuted my purpose of dismissing Dembinski and Perczel from the active army, as well as the restriction of Bem to his forces in Transylvania, as zealously as this could be done without betraying too early the real tendency of these measures.

I caused such of the officers of the army as had parliamentary qualifications, and were opposed to the party of the 14th of April, to be repeatedly urged to solicit their election to the Diet.

I persevered also in my resolution to commence the offensive against the Austrian army: for the abolition of the law of independence had not to resemble a victory which fear had gained over the giddiness of national arrogance, become superlative under Kossuth's infatuating influence; it had rather to bear the stamp of a voluntary manly act. Not under the incubus of apprehension for its own skin, but, on the contrary, after a calm estimate of those dangers which, in consequence of its own acts, threatened the life of the nation, and after a conscientious conviction that it was its duty to leave no means of salvation untried—had the Diet to declare that very law, with which it would perhaps have been most pleased, to be what it really was—incompatible with the true interests of the nation; then voluntarily to come back within the bounds of the rehabilitated constitution, and, however difficult this might be, with great and dignified self-abnegation offer to the Vienna government a peaceable arrangement, just at the moment of general confidence in

victory, and in spite of the public arrogance; but above all, to make the national cause, led back in this manner on the ground of justice and equity, its *personal* one, if the answer of the Vienna government should be the signal for the last combat for life and death.

I should, it is true, have had to disavow all my experiences of the year 1849, in order to give myself up to the deception, that the majority of the representatives were competent, of their own free impulse, to accomplish what, as above mentioned, I expected from them: but I rested my hope on the peace-party, and on the effects of those measures, by the use of which I intended to enable this party to gain the victory in parliament.

Some of these measures—the purging of the army as much as possible from those leaders who belonged to the party of the 14th of April; the strengthening of the peace-party in the Diet; the preparations for the offensive—were already in progress at the time when the executions of Mednyánszky and Gruber became known, and by the intense exasperation which they roused against Haynau and the Austrian government seemed to render fruitless all my endeavors.

It did not seem advisable to me to employ the other measures until after the Diet had recommenced its sittings. Not till then did I think I should come forward openly with my intentions against the party of the 14th of April, and avow myself undisguisedly an adherent of the peace-party; not till then did I hope to intimate, nor without success, to the Diet as well as to the Government, in the name of the army, that, with the same fidelity as hitherto, it would assuredly fulfil its duty, by defending to the last the positive rights of the nation; but that it felt not the least inclination to answer for the declaration of independence, deceitfully represented as having been demanded by it.

Thus it happened that, during my proceedings as war-minister, I concealed even from the peace-party what I intended to undertake against its political adversaries. Thus it happened that probably Kossuth and Szemere erroneously believed they had made in me an assured acquisition—the former for his 14th of April, the latter for his republic.

Szemere had perhaps taken the remark with which I had refused the rank of Field-marshal Lieutenant (namely, that this dignity, so far as I knew, was not indigenous in republics), as a

republican confession of faith. From this circumstance I also explained to myself, how it happened that I was elected deputy without having solicited it, and this by a district in which, to my knowledge, Szemere's name was very popular—mine not at all so. At least Szemere afterward gave me clearly enough to understand, that I owed this surprise exclusively to his interference in my behalf with his electors.

Besides, since my entrance into the ministry, Szemere had endeavored in a variety of ways to gain me over to a personal coalition with himself *against Kossuth*.

I, however, affected not to understand him.

I pursued the same course with Kossuth, so long as his desire for the chief command over the whole of the active national forces in Hungary and Transylvania made itself known only in modest allusions.

Kossuth at last thought he must speak more plainly; he did so, and was by me for a while encouraged in his hopes.

One consequence of this probably was, that he soon urgently pressed me to propose to him in my stead a commander-in-chief of the main army, as I had quite enough to do with fulfilling the duties of war-minister alone. This remark was incontrovertible; but I could not find the right man, that is, who would have been the right man for Kossuth. I proposed Klapka, whom I believed—as will be seen in Chapter LXI.—I had meanwhile gained for the offensive. Kossuth declared that he did not agree in this choice. A better I could not then hit upon.

Then, again, Kossuth wished that I should devote myself personally to the conduct of the war-operations exclusively, and as war-minister be represented by a substitute. This request was agreeable to me. My substitute in the war-ministry was confirmed without hesitation.

I had previously fixed the complement of the separate army corps at ten battalions of infantry, sixteen squadrons of cavalry, and five batteries—in all about 8000 infantry, 2000 cavalry, and forty pieces of artillery.

The army corps was distributed into three divisions: two divisions of infantry, each consisting of five battalions and a battery of foot-artillery; and one division of cavalry, composed of the whole cavalry of the army corps and a battery of horse-artillery.

One twelve-pounder battery and one of horse-artillery formed



the reserve of artillery, the employment of which in the field of battle belonged exclusively to the commander of the army corps.

The division had to represent as it were the operative *individual* of the army. Detachments of a considerable part of a division made by way of exception received the temporary appellation of "column."

Two or more army corps united under one chief command constituted an army.

One consequence of these definitions was, the final separation of the Kmety army division from the seventh army corps. The latter was organized, according to the new scheme, of those two-thirds of its original complement which had hitherto been united under Pöltenberg. At the same time the former Kmety army division was classified beforehand as an army corps, which was afterward to be completed. Pöltenberg and Kmety were made generals.

During my personal participation in governmental affairs, Csányi, the minister of communication, proposed in the ministerial council, by a general amnesty to put a speedy end to the labors—in many respects injurious—of the criminal courts of justice (*vésztörvényszékek*), which had been instituted for the vigorous punishment of treasonable crimes against the country. Also that the fugitives guilty of treason to the country, as well as the Hungarian subjects who were still serving in the hostile ranks, should be included in this amnesty, if they returned within a specified time to the reoccupied parts of the country.

Inconsiderately I had beforehand promised the proposer my vote in the council of ministers.

The deliberation, however, did not come to an end during the first session. I therefore gained time maturely to consider all the consequences of the proposed amnesty; and now declared myself *against* the amnesty, and only *for the abolition of the criminal courts of justice*.

I voted against the amnesty, because the government had not the means of giving validity to the act of grace. The pardoned persons would have come back; and the first-met troop of peasants (not to mention the amiable guerrillas)—having just been rendered fanatic against those who were pardoned by the agents of the very government from which the amnesty proceeded—

would doubtless have felt themselves called upon, in spite of the amnesty, after as before it, to execute the summary penal proceeding of Lynch-law against the innocent returning persons.

The proposal of the amnesty failed.

Although it had been my well-considered determination not to make known the hostile sentiments with which I was filled against the existence of the law of the 14th of April until the next meeting of parliament; nevertheless I gave way before that time to the increasing power of my exasperation at the manner in which Kossuth had called into being that law for the prospective destruction of Hungary.

Shortly before the commencement of the next offensive against the Austrian main army, there was added to those obstacles which—as we shall see afterward—had retarded it so long, a failure of the most indispensable supplies of money, which became more felt every day.

My patience now gave way. In an official letter to Kossuth, in which I threw light on the disproportion between the considerable financial wants of the army and the insignificant means for meeting them, the declaration of independence received a well-deserved epithet—of course not an honorable one.

I meant the contents of this letter to come to the knowledge of the assembled council of ministers; and convinced as I was beforehand that Kossuth intended and was capable of either suppressing it, or of paralyzing its effect in some manner, I had at the same time a duplicate of it transmitted direct to the minister of finance. Moreover I was careful not to fail of attending the sitting of the ministerial council at which it should be brought forward for discussion.

Kossuth received the ominous dispatch, and, as I had foreseen, would have gladly avoided communicating its contents to the ministerial council. That the minister of finance had a duplicate already in his hands, Kossuth did not know, when he invited me, immediately before the beginning of the approaching sitting, to follow him for the purpose of a private conference into his own apartment, which was separated from the consultation-room only by an ante-chamber.

Here he called me to account for the expression used in my official letter censuring the law of independence. I justified it, by asserting that neither the nation nor its representatives, and

least of all the army, for whose sake peculiarly the law had been proposed, had wished for it.

To weaken this assertion, Kossuth pointed to the addresses of homage which had flowed in on him since the 14th of April from all reoccupied parts of the country. With respect to this, I begged him to explain to me, what authorized him to estimate the worth of *these* addresses of homage higher than *those* which a few months previously Prince Windischgrätz had collected up and down the very same parts of the country.

Kossuth failed to give me any explanation.

That the law of independence had *not* been desired by the army, he did not venture moreover even to attempt to deny in this *tête-à-tête*. However, he did all he possibly could to induce me to retract and destroy the unpleasant official dispatch: I should consider, that my official attack upon the present law placed the existence of the ministry in question; and so forth. Not till I had assured him that the minister of finance would doubtless immediately lay before the council of ministers a duplicate of this dispatch, did Kossuth break off the conference, and we returned to the consultation-room.

The minister of finance had in fact the said duplicate ready, and now handed it over to Kossuth, with the surly remark, that only a part of its contents concerned himself.

The document was forthwith communicated in all its extent to the assembled ministers, and my not flattering opinion as to the opportuneness of the declaration of independence was silently accepted by those present as a thing self-evident.

The ministry found nothing in my attack on the existing law of state, which, as Kossuth had feared, jeopardized its existence; but Kossuth might perhaps have been induced by it to take care that the financial wants of the main army, at least during the course of the next few weeks were not—*more consueto*—less attended to than those of some government commissaries, political agents, and other such.

And to obtain this was properly the primary object of my so sudden and unceremonious rising against Kossuth.



## CHAPTER LX.

THE events which had occurred on the theatre of war of our main army from the taking of Ofen till the middle of June were in substance the following :

The expeditionary column of Major Armin Görgei, at the time of the taking of Ofen just about marching toward Silein on the Waag against the Austrian brigade of Major-general Barko, which had broken in through the defile of Jablunka, was—as the report stated—prevented from executing the intended expedition by the simultaneous advance (from Freystadl to Nyitra-Zsámbokrét) of a part of the hostile troops under Major-general Herzinger.

About this time the first Russian divisions, approaching from Neumarkt (in Gallicia), made their appearance in the Arva comitate. These were the advanced troops of the Russian corps under Major-general Saas.

In order to facilitate the protection of the mountain-towns, which had hereby been rendered uncommonly difficult, the strength of Armin Görgei's expeditionary column was increased by degrees to almost 3500 men and six pieces of artillery.

Major Görgei discontinued his incursions, and occupied only the direct approaches into the district of the mountain-towns, at Sztrecsen, Kralovján, Hermanecz, on the Sturecz, at Heiligenkreuz and Zsarnóc ; his reserve, however, encamped at Perk, to the north of Kremnitz.

The other expeditionary column of the seventh army corps, which has been several times mentioned, observed meanwhile the main road between Freystadl (Galgócz) and Neutra, supported afterward the operations of the first army corps by demonstrations against Freystadl, and at the same time kept up, as well as possible, considering the great distance, the communication of Major Görgei's expeditionary column with the main army.

The first army corps (General Nagy-Sándor), which had arrived from the camp at Ofen by Gran, Hull, and Komjáti in Urmény, in conjunction with the expeditionary column of the

seventh corps, had undertaken a forcible reconnoitering of the passage across the Waag at Freystadl and Schintau (Sempte), which was occupied by the enemy.

The enemy evacuated the last-mentioned place together with the half-completed *tête-de-pont*, and retreated to the right bank of the Waag, destroying the bridge behind him. At Freystadl, however, he maintained himself. He reoccupied also—after Nagy-Sándor's march back into his former position at Moesonok and Urmény—the point of Schintau, and completed the construction of his interrupted fortification.

During the following days till the middle of June, the operations of the first corps—as far as I remember—were confined to observing the course of the Waag from Schintau to Tárnócz.

The second corps (Colonel Asbóth) and the third (General Knézich) had advanced from the camp at Ofen as far as Neu-häusel. The advanced troops of the latter occupied Tardosked, those of the former Tót-Megyer. Those of the third corps had to observe the Waag from Tárnócz to Farkasd, the others from Farkasd to Szémő. The main body of both army corps remained together in Neu-häusel.

After the reconnoitering of the points of Freystadl and Schintau, undertaken by the first corps and the expeditionary column of the seventh corps, however, the second corps marched from Neu-häusel by Guta to Aszód, threw a floating bridge across the Neu-häusel branch of the Danube (below the mouth of the brook Feketeviz), and took charge of its defense against the hostile division posted at Szerdahely in the Great Schütt; while the third corps by itself had to observe the whole course of the Waag from Tárnócz as far as Szémő.

One part of the eighth army corps occupied Komorn, the other the line between Aszód and Száp on the Danube.

The seventh army corps maintained itself at Raab.

The Kmety division had been disposed in the first half of June from Veszprém by Pápa to Tét, in order to form the extreme left wing of the position of the seventh army corps on the Raab.

From this point General Kmety attempted to surprise the Austrian column under the command of Major-general Weiss, which had advanced by itself on the road from Ödenburg to Raab. This led to a bloody conflict at Csorna on the 13th of June. General Kmety conquered—the hostile commander re-

mained on the field of battle—his defeated troops retreated toward Bösárkány.

General Kmety, by disposing one of his attacking columns on the proper line of retreat of the enemy (the road from Csorna to Kapuvár), had intentionally forced him to the sideward retreat toward Bösárkány, on the supposition that the way thither was already occupied by a column of the seventh army corps. A similar column had in fact been directed by General Klapka, who acted in concert with General Kmety, to the territory between Bösárkány and Csorna; it arrived, however, too late. The enemy, pursued from Csorna, retreated consequently unimpeded as far as Bösárkány, evacuated finally this place likewise, retreated across the Rabnitz, destroyed the bridges, and thus escaped further pursuit.

General Kmety thereupon led his troops back to their original position on the river Raab, which he had to defend on the line from Rába-Szent-Mihály to Marczaltö.

The forces belonging to our main army in the middle of June (consisting, the garrison of Komorn included, of from 50,000 to 55,000 men) were consequently distributed on a line, which extended in length more than thirty (German) miles, from Rosenberg in the Liptau, at first between the rivers Waag and Gran, then, crossing the little river Neutra, between it and the Waag to the mouth of the latter in the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube, further a short distance along this branch upward as far as Aszód, and from thence, in the direction toward Raab, across the Great and the Wieselburg Danube, and finally along the little river Raab as far as Marczaltö.

Opposite this line extended the position of the Austrian main army on the left bank of the Danube from Silein on the Waag along this river in a southern direction as far as Zsigárd, and from thence in a southwestern direction over the Great Schütt to the Great Danube at Bös. On the right bank of this river the Austrian advanced troops in the Little Schütt and on the territory between the Weiselburg Danube and the Rabnitz, were moved forward to beyond the height of Hochstrass against the position of our seventh army corps; those of the extreme right wing of the hostile main army crossed and somewhat avoided the road from Edenburg to Raab at the height of Kapuvár.

All the passages over the river Waag in the range of this posi-



tion were in the enemy's power. Those at Freystadl and Schintau were rendered still more tenable by means of temporary fortifications.

According to the reports of our scouts, the reserves of the enemy—already reinforced by a Russian army corps, which was said to be 16,000 strong—stood at Presburg, which had been made tenable;—the concentration of a particular Austrian corps on the Styrian frontier was in full progress, and moreover the extreme right wing of the Austrian main army (to the south of the Neusiedel lake and the Hanság) had been considerably strengthened;—the forces of the Russian Major-general Sass, stationed in the Arva, numbered from 10,000 to 12,000 men;—and besides very considerable Russian forces were concentrating themselves in Gallicia at Dukla and Neumarkt.

The protection of the passages over the Waag at Freystadl and Schintau by temporary fortifications showed the intention of the Austrians to debouch on both points with a part of the army, after the Russian army corps, breaking into Hungary across its northern frontiers, should have begun to descend into the interior of the country, and thus to form during the advance of the Russian army for a certain time its extreme right wing, as it were.

Considering as two separate series of operations, on the one hand the conquest of Transylvania by the allied troops, which, as I supposed, were exclusively destined for this purpose; on the other, the relief of Temesvár and Arad by the Austrian southern army,—the ideas which I formed beforehand relative to the plan of operations of the combined armies in upper Hungary were as follows:

On the part of the Russians:

Their invasion and advance on two principal lines of operation; the *one* (a western) from Neumarkt in Gallicia through the Arva, Túrócz, the district of the mountain-towns, Ipolyság, Waizen, direct to Pesth;—the *other* (an eastern) from Dukla to Kaschau, and from thence according to the retrograde movements of our northern army.

On the part of the Austrians:

With the portion of the army debouching at Freystadl and Schintau—flank-movement with the Russian western army as far as the Danube, then investment of Komorn on the left bank of the Danube, between it and the Waag, in order to protect this

investment, as well as the basis of the Russian operations, against a repellent attack on our part from Gran. The other greater part of the Austrian army to maintain itself in the Great Schütt and on the right bank of the Danube, until our main army, by the movements of the Russian western army, shall either be obliged to give way on the southern left bank of the Danube, or be confined exclusively to the right one. The corps concentrated on the frontiers of Styria at Fürstenfeld to advance simultaneously by Stuhlweissenburg toward the capitals; that in the first of the cases just indicated, the movement of our main army might not remain undiscovered; and in the latter, the crossing of the Danube at the capitals by the Russian western army might be facilitated; and moreover an offensive, if intended by us, against Vienna and Wiener-Neustadt, be frustrated in its execution.

I was in fact very uncertain as to the strength of the two expected Russian armies; but after the reports of scouts which have been mentioned, I found no reason to suppose that Russia would interfere with half measures.

I knew still less about the time at which the Russian invasion *en gros* was really to be expected. The appearance, indeed, of the Russian advanced troops in the Arva showed that this moment could scarcely be far off; it even seemed not improbable that the Russian armies would make their irruption before the re-assembling of the Hungarian Diet. But as I was without any certain intelligence upon the subject, I could not positively contradict the possibility of a still longer delay; and my conviction that Hungary was absolutely lost, as soon as Russia seriously interfered for its subjugation, determined me not to desist from the last attempt in my power for saving it—that is, from those endeavors which had in view the abolition of the Debreczin law of independence of the 14th of April, with the intention of depriving the Russian intervention of its title of right, and thereby, if possible, of still preventing it from taking place—so long as the continued delay of the Russian armies left me even the least ray of hope for a favorable result from these endeavors.

How the offensive against the Austrian army was connected with these endeavors, I have indicated in the preceding chapter.

It remains now only to explain why this offensive was not begun till the middle of June—why not immediately after the taking of Ofen.

The clothing of the army had suffered very much during the April campaign; the foot-gear especially was in a state which gave reason to fear that after some forced marches, which not seldom appear necessary in operations on the open field, the number of battalions fit for service would be exceeded by the unfit. In Komorn (before the march against Ofen) the complaints of the commanders upon the defective condition of the clothing of the men had become so loud, that the serious doubts excited by this circumstance alone, whether we should continue the operations against the retreating Austrian main army, could have been suppressed only by a full appreciation of the enterprising spirit which animated the troops. This good disposition, it is true, had not deteriorated during the siege of Ofen, but certainly the foot-gear had. The few days' marching from the camp at Ofen into the new positions well-nigh finished it. The besieging operations during the seventeen days spent before Ofen had, it is true, left us time enough to remedy this defect; but the necessary means were not at our command. Kossuth had done much, surprisingly much, during the winter for the present supply of the wants of the army; but for their *regular* clothing no provision had yet been made. The government commissary, whom Kossuth had charged with procuring the needful supplies of clothing and equipment for the army, and who was under his own superintendence, promised much—did little—did least of all during the siege of Ofen. For this Kossuth himself was most to blame; for, just because he had taken upon himself to control the production of the clothing and equipment, but had somewhat too prematurely speculated on the entrance into Pesth—the shoemakers and tailors working for the army had to begin *in spe* this ovation from Debreczin to Pesth in the beginning of May, and the work of these good people suffered thereby a very constant interruption; the consequence of which was, that the army remained for weeks so defectively clothed, that it could not possibly answer the demands which would be made on it during the ensuing offensive operations.

The army had moreover suffered sensible losses numerically during the April campaign and before Ofen. Compensation for these losses appeared the more urgently necessary, as we must certainly expect to find the hostile army considerably increased.

Filling-up the gaps in an army on service with quite raw



recruits—the constant fate of our main army—is well known not to be one of the most promising preparations for an offensive. Nevertheless the circumstances were of such kind that it appeared by no means possible to defer any longer making good the complement of men in many cases. And moreover since Szemere (as minister of the interior) had officially assured me that from 10,000 to 12,000 recruits had already been levied as a compensation for the losses of the army, and an equal number for the reserve corps about to be formed, who were awaiting their destination; while Kossuth, on the other hand, spoke of the complete clothing, equipping, and arming of these men as of a thing done; I thought I had better not begin the offensive operations until the ranks of the army were filled up—which, according to the official assurances of these gentlemen, could be done within a few days. Nay, I hoped even to be able to bring the reserve corps also into the district of the operations of the army before the opening of the campaign.

In order to begin and speed the formation of these corps as judiciously as possible, the *cadres* for their battalions—composed of the more distinguished officers, sub-officers, and privates of the main army—were immediately sent to the stations for their formation.

By the middle of June, however, scarcely half the promised recruits for the main army were on the spot; and the formation of the reserve corps was in a far worse plight, for the already-raised recruits were not—as Szemere had affirmed—awaiting their destination, but, on the contrary, the *cadres* of the battalions had to await the results of the levy only just set on foot; while of the supplies necessary for clothing, arming, and equipping these men, no traces were to be seen till about the middle of June.

Not less baseless than the official assurances of Szemere and Kossuth respecting it, had the latter's stereotyped asseveration, constantly recurring since the beginning of April, proved to be, according to which the main army was to be recruited by from 12,000 to 16,000 men, who, as it was said, were unnecessary to Field-marshal Lieutenant Bem.

I saw at last—too late unfortunately—that I had acted imprudently in delaying the long-intended offensive even for a single day, from relying on Kossuth's and Szemere's promises.

The unsuccessful efforts to be described in the next chapters, as fully as my defective recollections allow me, which were made by the main body of our army for the purpose of dislodging the enemy from his position on the Waag, were the beginning in earnest of this offensive.

But in case the political object, for the furtherance of which, as is known, this offensive was intended, should prove unattainable; that is, either if Austria, by the return of the Hungarian Diet from the law of independence to the constitution of 1848, should no longer allow to be contested its rightful title to the aid of Russia for the carrying out of the octroyed constitution—or if the invasion of the Russian army should commence even before the assembling of the Diet; in this case, according to the ideas which I had formed, as above pointed out, of the plan of operations of the combined armies, the same lines on which the divers parts of our main army had advanced were also assigned to them for the retreat.

The expeditionary column of Major Görgei had accordingly to retreat first to Waizen, and afterward, according to circumstances, to Pesth or Gran; the other expeditionary column (of the seventh army corps) by Neutra and Verebély into the valley of the lower Gran; the main body of the army (the first, second, and third corps) to Gran; the mobile part of the eighth army corps from its position in the Great Schütt, as a matter of course, to Komorn; the seventh army corps into the fortified camp opposite Komorn; General Kmety, finally, on the Stuhlweissenburg road toward the capitals.

The last combat for Hungary—so I thought—was to be fought on the right bank; and in order to give it more enduring importance, a manufactory of arms and a powder-mill were to be set up in Komorn.

Opposite Gran, to secure the possibility of favorable events, the establishment of a *tête-de-pont* had been undertaken, and on the bank of the Gran itself the construction of bank-batteries. Previously the erection of similar batteries on the points most favorable for crossing the Danube below Gran, as well as a fortified camp on the Tihany peninsula on the northwestern bank of the Platten lake, had been proposed.

The idea of this latter means of defense had been formed during the siege of Ofen—not by me, but by the government in

Debreczin. Thus it seemed as if Kossuth was originally not averse to the idea of fighting the last desperate battle on the right bank of the Danube, and not in Transylvania, as was in prospect immediately before the April campaign.

I hoped to win him over completely for the carrying out of this idea.

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## CHAPTER LXI.

ON the 16th of June Colonel Asbóth, commander of the second army corps, had to cross with a part of it the Neuhausel branch of the Danube at Aszód, and to drive the enemy back upward to the territory between the brook Feketeviz and the river Waag, in order to secure the crossing of the third army corps over the Waag, to be effected at Négyed.

The advance took place; the hostile forces, which occupied Királyrév and Zsigárd, were dislodged from both these places, obliged to retreat toward Pered, and lost thereby—according to Asbóth's report—three guns. Colonel Asbóth joined, by Farkasd and Négyed, the third army corps, on the opposite bank of the Waag.

But the enemy was reinforced, and made an energetic counter-attack. The consequence of this was, that Colonel Asbóth in his turn evacuated Zsigárd and Királyrév. Those of his forces which had been disposed to Farkasd hastened meanwhile to strengthen the hard-pressed right wing of our position in Zsigárd, but found the village already in the enemy's power, and themselves separated from their main body retreating to Aszód—a junction with it on the left being hindered by the marshes of the Holtvág—and were obliged to draw back again to Farkasd; while Colonel Asbóth, after having lost, besides the three captured guns, three also of his own, gave up the further contest, and led his troops back into their former position on the Neuhausel branch of the Danube.

While this was taking place on the right bank of the Waag, General Knézich stood with the main body of the third army



corps on the left bank of the river, opposite Farkasd and Négyed. His sub-commanders urged him to cross the river with the boats which were at hand, and assist Colonel Asbóth. He refused this request, however, declaring that he had received no express orders to do so.

The separate parts of the second army corps in Farkasd consequently remained exposed alone to the hostile attacks. The enemy, however, did not molest them, probably supposing them to be the *tête* of the third army corps, which had already crossed to the right bank of the Waag.

On the same day General Nagy-Sándor, with the first corps, had to attack at Schintau, in order to attract the hostile forces to this point, and hinder as far as possible the reinforcement of the right wing of the hostile position on the Waag. In this service he lost four of the guns of his twelve-pounder battery.

My expectations of finding in one of the three commanders of army corps, Knézich, Nagy-Sándor, and Asbóth, a compensation for Generals Damjanics and Aulich, were much lowered in consequence of the experiences of the 16th.

I now resolved to have the attempt at crossing repeated on the 20th of June by the whole of the second army corps. That it might not founder again, however, through General Knézich's want of independence, I intended personally to take part in this operation.

The dispositions for it had already been issued, when I received a letter from General Klapka, in which he dissuaded me from continuing the offensive, and renewed his original proposal to observe the defensive. This requirement on the part of General Klapka came on me very unexpectedly.

After my return from Debreczin, where I staid only a few days—while Kossuth celebrated in Pesth his well-known entry as governor of the country, I had proceeded to Raab, in company with the chief of the central office of operations, in order to gain Klapka for the offensive on the left bank of the Danube.

I nevertheless did not think it advisable to communicate to General Klapka the ultimate political object on which my determination to assume the offensive at any price was really founded; because, from his views about its being still possible for Hungary to maintain itself on the basis of the declaration of independence, I concluded that he might not agree even in prin-

ciple with my endeavors directed against the existence of the law of independence: for *he* believed in some intervention or other in favor of Hungary against Austria and Russia; while *I* considered the confession of this belief even then as the sign by which the adherents of the party of the 14th of April might be recognized with certainty.

But I thought I ought to keep secret from General Klapka not only the political idea which lay at the bottom of my urging to the offensive, but also the intention which determined me even to begin it on the left bank of the Danube.

This intention was—as has been already mentioned—to give the new commanders of army corps, Knézich, Nagy-Sándor, and Asbóth, as soon as possible an opportunity of showing their capabilities as well as their moral independence in front of the enemy. But, as is known, this intention was formed in me from having felt the necessity of finding a compensation for Generals Damjanics and Aulich, if the future performances of the main army were not to be far behind its exploits hitherto; since neither Klapka's talents as a general, although extraordinary, nor my own efforts, had seemed to me to be sufficient to render this compensation unnecessary.

In order to be able to speak with Klapka about all this *sans façon*, I ought to have been convinced that he would not be offended by it. But I was far from such a conviction, having not yet forgotten the disagreeable personal controversies that took place between him and Damjanics during the April campaign.

Moreover, during the conference in question with Klapka at Raab, not the least occasion occurred for disclosing to him the peculiar motives of my determination for the offensive in general, and for its being commenced on the left bank of the Danube in particular.

For after the chief of the central office of operations had briefly developed to General Klapka, in my presence, the outlines of this offensive—namely, first to gain the line of the Waag; to regulate our further movements by those of the enemy, but at all events to aim at Presburg as the final object of our operations, and in case the enemy should—to protect that place—throw a considerable part of his forces from the right to the left bank of the Danube, to attempt on the right bank to reach Wieselburg and Hungarian Altenburg with the seventh army corps—Klapka

at once declared, although about a fortnight previously the defensive had been proposed by himself, that he nevertheless agreed in the execution of this plan of offensive operations.

I had no reason to ascribe this agreement to any other cause than the accordance of our opinions on the purely strategic part of the matter in question.

And hence it was that Klapka's letter, in which he advised me, after the unsuccessful undertakings of the 16th of June, to give up the offensive, came on me really unexpectedly: the more unexpectedly, as this letter did not contain a single well-founded objection either to the plan of operations itself or to the manner of its execution; but merely recommended the abandonment of the offensive in general, and the adoption of his plan of defensive operations, which had been laid aside.

In reading this letter I could not help supposing that its contents had been occasioned by some personal misunderstanding between Klapka and the chief of the central office of operations; and I requested the latter not to conceal it from me, if such were the case. He, however, assured me, he could not remember having given General Klapka any cause of discontent with him; unless it were that Klapka had been wounded by the adherence of the central office of operations to my order to consider the Kmety division as an independently-operative part of the army, while General Klapka claimed the chief command over it.

It is true General Klapka had in some measure a right to it; for, according to his plan of defensive operations, accepted by the council of ministers in Debreczin, and in consequence of his nomination as commander-in-chief of the fortress of Komorn as well as of the fortified camp and of the forces concentrated round Komorn and at Raab, three army corps were to be united under his chief command, namely, besides the eighth army corps in Komorn, and the seventh at Raab, another, one of those three which—silently rejecting his plan of defensive operations—I had destined for the attack on the hostile position on the Waag.

In desiring the subordination of the Kmety division under his chief command, General Klapka consequently demanded only a compensation, and that an insufficient one, for the army corps withheld from him.

That this indemnification had not been adjudged him by the chief of the central office of operations—who acted according to



my positive order to let the Kmety division operate independently—might doubtless have made him feel sore. However, in all sincerity, I could not discover the logical connection between the certainly possible anger thereat, and the rejection of the idea about the offensive, which Klapka had unconditionally concurred in twelve or fourteen days before, as well as the taking up again the defensive idea, which ten or twelve days ago he had unconditionally abandoned; or, more correctly, I believed the possibly actual existence of a connection, even though illogical, ought not to be assumed.

The circumstance, however, that General Klapka had so urgently advised me not *before*, but only immediately *after* the unsuccessful first attempt to gain the line of the Waag, to abandon the offensive, and, as a natural consequence, to resume the plan of defensive operations—this circumstance recalled to my mind Klapka's undeniable peculiarity of being easily induced, by the difficulties of execution, to abandon resolutions formed.

It seemed to me as if the honor of having turned off Klapka's sympathies from the offensive back again to the defensive was due exclusively to the unfavorable results of the 16th of June.

After that day Klapka appeared to be convinced that it would not be possible to force the line of the Waag; I was not yet.

Had Klapka supported his conviction by the application to the case in question of the maxims and dogmas of tactics and strategy, he might perhaps have succeeded in inducing me to attempt the forcing of the line of the Waag—in another manner.

In wholly dissuading me from the offensive he would by no means have been successful under the then existing conjunctures.

As has been explained in the preceding chapter, only the commencement of the Russian intervention *en gros* could determine me to adopt this course.

This intervention had, indeed, commenced before the 20th of June, by the invasion of the Russian main army, from Dukla across the northern frontiers of Hungary, and actually in the most imposing manner; on which day—as will subsequently be seen—the attack on the Austrian position on the Waag, which miscarried on the part of the Hungarians on the 16th, was repeated. I did not receive the first news of this invasion, however, till *after the 21st of June*.

Thus is explained how it happened that I did not even on the 20th of June give up the intended offensive against the Austrians, although the Russian main army already menaced Kaschau; that my efforts *against* the law of independence of the 14th of April, 1849, and *for* the constitution of 1848, were thereby destroyed, and simultaneously with these efforts the hitherto special motives for this offensive bearing; and that Hungary—according to my conviction—began to agonize.

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## CHAPTER LXII.

FARKASD and Négyed, situated on the right bank of the Waag, had been ours since the 16th of June, and were occupied by detachments of the second army corps. This circumstance rendered possible the undisturbed formation of a bridge over the Waag at Négyed; and consequently on the 20th of June the third army corps could cross the river without hindrance, and take a direct part in the decisive attack, intended to be made this day on the right wing of the hostile position on the Waag.

The dispositions for this attack were briefly as follows:

For the second army corps (Colonel Asbóth) in the camp at Aszód: to cross the Neuhausel branch of the Danube at Aszód, and advance against Királyrév and Zsigárd, while the detachments of this corps which were in Farkasd and Négyed advance simultaneously against Zsigárd.

For the third corps (General Knézieh) in the camp at Tardosked: to cross the Waag at Négyed, and follow the detachments of the second corps which are advancing from Farkasd against Zsigárd.

For the first corps (General Nagy-Sándor) in Mocsonok: to make demonstrations against Schintau and the adjoining part of the Waag; should circumstances be favorable, to attack in earnest, and attempt to gain the right bank of the Waag.

For the expeditionary column of the seventh army corps on the main road to Neutra: to make demonstrations against Freystadl.

General Klapka received orders, with a part of the eighth corps

to undertake the protection of the bridge at Aszód against the enemy posted in Vásárut, to secure the line of retreat of the second corps.

Very early on the morning of the 20th Colonel Asbóth began with the troops of his corps which were in the camp at Aszód the crossing of the Neuhausel branch of the Danube. When I arrived at the bridge of Aszód, the passage over the river was already effected, and the advance of the second corps against Királyrév and Zsigárd in progress. Satisfied for the present of the right execution of the dispositions, I here awaited General Klapka, who had likewise to arrive at the bridge of Aszód in the course of the same morning.

I had neglected, as unimportant, to send a written answer to his letter mentioned in the preceding chapter; but nevertheless, in order to obviate suspicions, I thought it advisable to make use of the favorable opportunity which was just about offering itself for a verbal answer. My verbal answer to Klapka had, however, to be confined to the simple remark, that the dispositions for the offensive undertaking that was just beginning had already been sent to the divers army corps when I received his letter. From the preceding chapter it must be sufficiently evident why I considered a fuller discussion of the contents of this letter as by no means advisable.

Consequently after I had by the above-mentioned remark, adduced in the form of an excuse, removed from General Klapka all ground for undefined suspicions, I quickly turned the conversation to the approaching events of the day; and it was agreed between us, that the principal attack just beginning on the right bank of the Waag should be seconded by simultaneous offensive movements in the Great Schütt, namely against the enemy at Vásárut. Finally General Klapka pledged himself to take the conduct of these offensive movements in person.

In the meantime the second army corps had encountered the enemy at Zsigárd; the conflict appeared not to be without importance, and I hastened to take part in it.

To the north of Királyrév and Zsigárd I found the second army corps alone in combat with two hostile divisions, one of which defended Pered, the other deployed in front of Alsó-Széllý. Between them gaped a large interval: at least no position of troops could be seen on this line to form as it were the hostile centre.



In like manner Colonel Asbóth had also distributed his forces chiefly on the wings.

Taking my route to the bridge of Aszód by Királyrév, I arrived first at the left wing of our line of battle. This wing—leaning to the left on the marshy brook Dudvág—was pressing its adversary back with all its might toward Alsó-Széllő.

Our right wing, however, seemed to have met at Pered a far more obstinate resistance.

During my ride toward this wing my attention was especially occupied by three Honvéd battalions. They seemed to have to form with one battery and one squadron of hussars the centre of our line of battle. But I found two of them in complete disorder, taking to flight; and the third just about following the bad example of the other two. These battalions had been ordered to support, by their advance against the southern and southwestern skirts of Pered, the attack of the right wing on its eastern circuit. But they had allowed themselves to be shaken to such a degree by the fire of the hostile batteries posted to the west of Pered, that they were brought into the state of disorder in which I found them. Here immediate redress appeared most urgently demanded. One part of my escort surrounded the wavering battalion, to prevent, in the first instance, its entire dispersion; while another part, with the assistance of some hussars, was charged to put a stop to the flight of the two battalions which were already in disorder. The uninterrupted fire of the enemy's batteries rendered the accomplishment of these two objects very difficult. In order to make it possible, however, the most severe measures had to be employed against the disobedient battalions.

While this was in progress, Colonel Asbóth suddenly arrived in haste from the extreme right wing, consoled the deserting troops with the prospect of being supported by the third army corps just advancing from Farkasd, and invited them to secure themselves in a natural ditch situated still further back. Of course the effect of the coercive measures, which up to this moment had not been unsuccessfully employed, was instantly paralyzed by this invitation. My followers had to redouble their efforts to restore order in the battalions, which were confirmed in their want of courage by the commander of their corps, and finally to lead them forward to storm on the southern and southwestern skirts of Pered.

The right wing, in spite of the spiritless conduct of the battalions of the centre, had meanwhile continued with increasing energy its attacks on the eastern circuit of this place, and had already obtained a firm footing in the interior of the village. Supported by the final advance of these battalions, it now succeeded—before the arrival of the third army corps on the field—in completely driving the enemy out of Pered. The village of Alsó-Szély had been taken earlier and with less effort by our left wing.

After the loss of these two points the enemy renounced any further opposition, and retreated from Pered by Deáki, from Alsó-Szély by Felső-Szély toward Diószeg. Near the close of the contest he might also have been shaken by the emerging of the head of the column of the third army corps in front of Zsigárd.

This column was, however, not the whole of the third corps, but only about three-fifths of it, the remainder of it having been disposed on the right bank of the Waag up toward Sellye, for the purpose of endeavoring to cross the river somewhere thereabouts. But it was found to be impossible to do so in this direction.

These two-fifths of the third corps had consequently to march back again as far as Négyed, in order to join us; and as I thought it not advisable to undertake without them the further advance against Diószeg, and as their arrival at Pered, on account of the great circuit they had to make, seemed scarcely possible before nightfall, the continued pursuit of the enemy was stopped, and troops for safety only were advanced as far as Deáki and Felső-Szély and Sellye on the Waag was observed by means of patrols, while a part of the second corps occupied Alsó-Szély and Királyrév, a part of the troops present of the third corps Hetmény, and the main bodies of both army corps encamped at Pered.

General Knézich had, in spite of the advice of the commanders of his division—as is known—hesitated to support Colonel Asbóth during the engagement on the 16th of June, merely on the ground that he had not received express orders to render this assistance from the central office of operations. For a similar though utterly untenable reason, the third army corps in the course of this day (the 20th of June) likewise arrived too late on the battle-field.

It was known to General Knézich that on this day I intended to undertake in person the conduct of the operations. He con-

sequently thought he should receive from me on this occasion a quite special order of march ; but as I had no suspicion of this settled idea, and consequently did not believe it necessary to send an especial order of march to the third corps, General Knézich was determined to let his corps from beyond the Waag again look on inactively at the combat, until at last his sub-commanders morally forced him to advance. With all this, he marched only a part of his forces over the standing bridge at Négyed—as has been mentioned—to the right bank of the Waag ; the considerable remainder of them had—so he seemed to suppose—to effect the passage of the river at a spot where the necessary means for doing so did not exist.

This last circumstance could not have been unknown to General Knézich. As, however, in the dispositions for attack for the 20th of June—probably for the sake of brevity—the details of the dispositions for the 16th were referred to, and in these the detaching of a part of the third army corps to the Waag, opposite Sellye, as a demonstration, was ordered ; General Knézich might have supposed that he had to repeat the same detaching for the purpose of the real crossing over the Waag, ordered for the 20th of June.

That General Knézich could have supposed this, fully convinced me of the insufficiency of his self-reliance to answer those claims which must be made upon an independent leader of an army corps.

General Knézich, as chief of a division, under the command of General Damjanics, had performed many a distinguished service. Nevertheless, and just on account of his want of independence, he was not in his place as an independent commander of an army corps.

That in which General Knézich was so sadly deficient seemed to have been richly bestowed on Colonel Asbóth, namely, self-confidence ; but he was wanting in that certain tact, by which the commander perceives on the battle-field how far he may allow his self-confidence to carry him, without burdening his troops with more than, from the state of their discipline, they are able to perform.

Of all the Hungarian leaders Aulich alone possessed this tact in a rare degree. As commander of the same army corps of which Colonel Asbóth was now the chief, Aulich had splendidly



evinced this tact by his demonstrations during the April campaign against the Austrian main army concentrated before Pesth.

(Colonel Asbóth was serving then in the second corps, and assisted in those demonstrations under Aulich's guidance.)

This tact can hardly be taught; but may be learned by observation. Colonel Asbóth nevertheless had not caught it from General Aulich.

Full of personal courage, and animated—as I have mentioned—by unbounded self-confidence, Colonel Asbóth led his corps as he might have been justified in doing if the last of its Honvéds had possessed at least as much personal valor and not less self-confidence than his commander.

That the troops thereby lost their steadiness is easily conceivable; and also that Colonel Asbóth was least of all the man to restore it: of this he had just given me a proof in the last conflict.

He orders some battalions to advance in the most effective range of the well-sustained fire of hostile artillery. The battalions run away. Colonel Asbóth points out to the runaways a place of refuge situated still further back.

According to my views, this is the method of systematically teaching his troops to take to their heels.

The commander should either avoid advancing troops in the vehement fire of artillery, if they are not qualified for the experiment; or at the same time take appropriate measures for remaining master of the doubtful troops.

To spare a battalion (to post it as much protected as possible) which has to remain passive in the fire is the bounden duty of a commander. But a battalion which, under similar circumstances, is destined to *activity*, *must not* be spared. If it spare itself (perhaps by running away), measures must be taken of such a kind as will bring it forthwith out of the rain under the spout.

The proper measures for this purpose, it is true, are neither soothing nor fondling. But at least they are not more inhuman than subsequent decimation, and do not, like it, hobble after the crime as a punishment, but mostly stifle it—if employed *a tempo*—in its rise, and are consequently more practical, in cases where their instant application is really necessitated and at the same time possible.

If troops are ordered to advance unprotected in the range of

an uncommonly vigorous fire from a numerous hostile artillery, something of higher importance than the existence of the exposed troops must be the motive.

If this be not the case, then away with the commander who uselessly sacrifices his troops. But even if really exposed without a motive, they must *not* run away *with impunity*.

In what precedes I have pointed out that moment of the battle in which Asbóth's right wing had met with an obstinate resistance at Pered, while the left wing continually pressed the enemy back toward Alsó-Széllő, and took, after a short delay, this place likewise. At the same time the arrival of the third corps was soon to be expected. This was known to Colonel Asbóth; of the indicated position of affairs in the range of the battle a single glance might inform him.

Let us now see what Colonel Asbóth undertakes as independent leader of the combat.

He orders Pered to be forced.

This was, at all events, the last thing he ought to have done; because the forcing of a position is in general to be undertaken only when no other means of becoming master of it remains.

In the circumstances above mentioned the employment of this means was not in the least necessary; for Asbóth's left wing menaced already the natural line of retreat of the hostile army corps at Pered, which consequently, even without being forced, could not hold out much longer. Moreover the column of the third corps was already approaching. To turn Pered on the east, executed by the column of the third army corps, would have been far more dangerous to the enemy than forcing it, and besides could have been done at much less sacrifice.

Forcing is well known to be the highest price paid on the theatre of war for a place.

An independent commander who unnecessarily has recourse to forcing is a squanderer. Squanderers must be placed under guardianship.

In justification of Asbóth, it might perhaps be supposed that, with a lively recollection of his disaster on the 16th, and fearing the approach of hostile reinforcements, as well as a repetition of delay on the part of General Knézich, he had wished, before the arrival of these reinforcements, speedily to establish himself in Pered, in order to maintain himself more easily against the hos-

tile superior forces, in case General Knézich should still continue to delay.

This supposition, however, was opposed by the following consideration.

If Colonel Asbóth had really apprehended the approach of hostile reinforcements, he ought not, after all, to have advanced beyond the line of Zsigárd and Királyrév, but have contented himself with maintaining these two points. For here he stood almost an hour's march nearer to General Knézich; while the enemy was just as much further from his succors than in Pered and Alsó-Széllý.

The forcing of Pered was consequently in no way to be justified.

This, however, only called in question Asbóth's capability as an *independent* leader of a hostile undertaking of *greater importance*.

But his procedure with the fugitive battalions, namely, the facts, that he had encouraged them to run still further, and then to end by hiding themselves, instead of bringing them to their senses by the most rigorous severity; that moreover he had given them at the same time the consoling assurance, that the brave third army corps would finish with the enemy, instead of urging them rather not to allow it to dispute with them the honor of the victory;—these facts led me finally to perceive that Colonel Asbóth had not even the ability to maintain in the second army corps that discipline and that spirit, which it owed to the personal influence of General Aulich.

I have thought it necessary to enter into all these details to show the motives which induced me to remove General Knézich and Colonel Asbóth in the course of the 20th of June from their charges as commanders of corps.

The command of the third corps was intrusted to Colonel (soon afterwards General) Count Leiningen; that of the second corps to Colonel Kászonyi.

At the same time the commanders of the infantry divisions of the second corps requested to be exempted from further service, on account of shattered health. The chief of the general staff of the corps had already done the same. Consequently in the afternoon of the 20th of June the four most important charges of the second corps were transferred to new hands;—certainly not a desirable circumstance immediately before a decisive conflict.



It will be remembered that I had judged it necessary to await at Pered the arrival of the smaller half of the third army corps, which had been detached on the left bank of the Waag. The further advance was not to begin till very early next day (the 21st of June), and simultaneously with it the forcing of the passage over the Waag at Schintau by the first corps. The commander of the latter (General Nagy-Sándor) received an order to this effect late in the afternoon of the 20th by two orderly officers, who started as couriers for the camp of the first corps directly after the taking by storm of Pered, which was about two o'clock in the afternoon; with it finished the day's battle.

Before nightfall (between the 20th and 21st of June), however, I received two reports, in consequence of which my resolution to advance the next morning aggressively underwent an important change.

These reports were: one from General Klapka, that he had in the mean time been defeated by the Austrians at Nyárasd in the Great Schütt; and another from scouts, that the Russian army corps, previously stationed *en reserve* at Presburg, had arrived at Diószeg during the forenoon, and was already marching against us.

Simultaneously a report arrived from the outposts, that the enemy had strongly garrisoned Sellye on the Waag. There was consequently no doubt that he would *himself* attack on the following day (21st of June). He could now do so with the probable prospect of a favorable result; for after the accession of the Russian corps to those troops which had been opposed to our second corps during the day, he was numerically superior to us; and these troops formed besides, according to the reports of all our scouts, only the smaller part of the Austrian forces on the Waag—the greater stood at Schintau, Szered, and Freystadl.

Under these circumstances it seemed to me more advisable not to advance next morning, but await the hostile attack at Pered without moving, and to pursue the offensive only in case we either remained unattacked till noon of the 21st, or, on the other hand, were victorious. I was urged to this change in my former resolution by the following view of our present situation.

General Klapka was forced to remain on the defensive in consequence of the unfortunate issue of the battle at Nyárasd; while his adversary in the Great Schütt, on the contrary, had

his hands free, and was crossing with the greater part of his forces to the left bank of the Neuhausel branch of the Danube, to reach Királyrév in the rear of our two corps united at Pered. The danger these corps ran of thus losing their retreat to Aszód and Négyed must become the more imminent the further from these points of retreat they were engaged in serious conflict with the enemy, who stood directly opposite them and was numerically superior.

In our position at Pered this danger was as yet inconsiderable, because Királyrév and Pered are situated within the extreme battle-range of a force of from 15,000 to 16,000 men and 80 guns—about the amount of the total strength of the second and third corps.

With such a force it was still possible without especial difficulty, simultaneously, on the one hand, at Pered, to restrain the too speedy southern advance of even a superior enemy; and on the other hand, at Királyrév, to get rid of a troublesome adversary. Nay, even if this were not admitted, the common retreat by Négyed remained nevertheless secured to the two corps united at Pered, since Zsigárd (the central point of this line of retreat) is almost at an equal distance from Pered and Királyrév; and as the enemy during his advance from Királyrév to Zsigárd, had to observe precautionary measures requiring much time, but which were unnecessary to our army corps on their march from Pered back to Zsigárd.

I repeat then, that the common retreat—if, in the worst but also most improbable case, necessitated for the two army corps united at Pered—by Zsigárd, Farkasd, and Négyed, was strategically secured to them already by the circumstance that, by advancing beyond Pered, they were not exposed to a doubtful conflict. And if I moreover mention, that this line of retreat—though terminating in a passage over the river—appeared to me even tactically not an unfavorable one, from its being unassailable in flank, and the not despicable points of support, Farkasd and Négyed, being situated on it—I do so merely that I may give complete the series of considerations by which, on the 20th of June, I arrived at the conviction, that the situation of the second and third corps at Pered was not more dangerous than in general is that of any force which is about to engage in a serious conflict with an enemy numerically superior.

This conviction, however, could not of course suffice by itself to determine me to bring on a conflict, which, although it appeared to have no extraordinarily unfavorable probabilities *against* it, seemed to have as few especially favorable ones *for* it. This conviction could in any case exercise only a passive influence on the resolution to accept or to offer battle. It kept aloof at most the motives dissuading from such a resolution; it could not offer any *inciting* thereto. And consequently it still remains to be explained from what motives I came to the determination so unreservedly to accept or to offer battle on the 21st of June.

These motives were:

The apprehension of forfeiting the confidence of the army, if, after the advantages obtained over the enemy on the 20th of June by the second corps alone, I should give up again, on the following day, with the second and third corps, without a previous contest, the scarcely gained right bank of the Waag;—

The hope that the energetic attempts to cross the Waag enjoined on General Nagy-Sándor would not be without a favorable influence on the events of the next day;—and moreover

The necessity of learning something positive about the *qualitative* importance of the Russian intervention, even should it only have the effect of preventing the wide-spread rumors that the Russian troops who had already entered Hungary were merely disguised Slowaks, Russniaks, Wasserpols, Hannaks, and such like, from obtaining belief in the army, and completely destroying its manly spirit, already seriously endangered by the stories about the impending interventions *for* Hungary.

With reference to the favorable influence of Nagy-Sándor's attempts to cross the Waag on the events of the next day, I had resolved on the following combinations:

Either the energetic attacks of General Nagy-Sándor might shake the enemy's intention of attacking us on the next morning at Pered. In this case likewise no advance toward our line of retreat was to be feared from the Great Schütt, in spite of Klapka's defensive bearing, and consequently nothing would prevent us from continuing our offensive.

Or Nagy-Sándor's attempt to cross the Waag, in the rear of the enemy engaged in combat with us at Pered, would succeed; and then the moment was come for the second and third corps to exchange unreservedly the defensive for the offensive, because



all care about their lines of retreat to Aszód and Négyed would seem to be rendered superfluous by the prospect, after the main body of the enemy was forced back, of being able to effect a junction with Nagy-Sándor, and thus, if necessary, to make use of his passage of the Waag as the common point of retreat for all the three army corps.

My dispositions for the 21st were accordingly as follow :

The second corps to take up its position between Pered and the little river Dudvág; the third corps between Pered and the Waag. The former to advance two battalions with two guns, and also some cavalry for the performance of the orderly and patrolling service, as far as Alsó-Szély. This column to evacuate the said place only on the approach of a superior hostile force, and then without an obstinate resistance. Should this happen, it is to retreat as far as Királyrév, occupy it, and charge itself besides from that time with the protection of the flank of the second corps, following it on its left in echelons in case of an advance.

The third corps to occupy the Puszta Hetmény with a small number of troops, in order to secure its right flank against a surprise by being turned. The task devolving on the latter to be, the observance, during the whole day, of the movements of the enemy on the bank of the Waag. It has to follow the movements of the army in flank, without leaving the bank of the river.

The village of Pered, divided from north to south into two almost equal halves by a principal street, with its eastern half to serve as point of support to the left wing of the third corps, with the western one to the right wing of the second corps, and according to this arrangement to be occupied by divisions of both corps. The whole cavalry with its batteries to undertake the protection of the open ground between Pered and the little river Dudvág. The point of retreat of the second corps to be the bridge at Aszód, that of the third corps the one at Négyed.

The second and third corps, in the position at Pered indicated in these dispositions, were attacked in the forenoon of the 21st of June by Russian and Austrian troops.

Our outposts in Felső-Szély, and those in Deáki and Alsó-Szély, had been obliged—the former *before*, the latter soon *after* daybreak—to retreat to Pered, on account of the approach of con-

siderable hostile forces from the north and northwest against those points.

The two Honvéd battalions and two guns of the second corps, disposed at Alsó-Széllő, retreated to Királyrét, according to the above-mentioned arrangement, and occupied this place, in which there had been till then only an insignificant post. Two strong hostile columns, composed of three kinds of arms, followed them after a considerable time, at short intervals from each other.

This was the hostile right wing. The centre simultaneously deployed before Deáki, the left wing did the same to the east of it, and in almost immediate communication with the centre; while his right wing was isolated by an interval of at least a quarter of a mile, and seemed about to turn the left wing of *our* line of battle.

But this manœuvre, which, by the way, was not an unexpected one, having been already originally provided against by our cavalry being placed to the left in echelons, as well as by occupying Királyrét; the said movement of the hostile right wing could be left unheeded for the present, and we awaited the attack, without changing our position in the least.

This attack commenced with a brisk fire of artillery from the hostile centre and left wing, while only the foremost of the two columns of the right wing marched direct against Királyrét, but the hindmost halted in the prolongation of our deployed left wing, at about two gun-ranges distant from it.

The infantry divisions of the second corps (to the left) answered the hostile cannonade without moving, those of the third corps (to the right) while advancing. By this manœuvre it was intended partially to divert from the second corps the very galling fire of the hostile centre.

It seemed, however, as if this measure would not be successful; for while the divisions of the third corps resolutely advanced, those of the second corps were soon shaken, began at last even to give way, and slackened their fire in the same degree as that of the hostile centre increased in vigor.

In the centre of the enemy an advancing might be remarked, which was not the case with his left wing.

From what precedes, it is evident that both lines of battle came by degrees into a fronting direction, oblique to their original one, both right wings being advanced; so that the enemy's line

of battle gained more and more a direction which formed a right angle with his natural line of retreat toward Diószeg ; while our line threatened ultimately to fall into the direction of our points of retreat, which would soon be attainable *only* by a flank-march to the left.

This derangement of the lines of battle from their original principal direction—from east to west into that from northeast to southwest—was now the most unfavorable change for us ; and it was necessary either to order the infantry divisions of the third corps to draw back, or to render possible the re-advance of those of the second corps. I was determined to try first the latter means.

A part of the cavalry division of the third corps was to fall upon the cavalry attached to the right wing of the hostile centre, the larger remainder to follow with the battery as a support ; while the cavalry division of the second corps (in the array, to the left of that of the third corps) was simultaneously to direct its attacks against the column of the extreme right hostile wing, which, as just mentioned, menaced our left.

By the first of these cavalry attacks I hoped to oblige the hostile centre to a retrograde movement, and thus to disengage the infantry divisions of the second corps ; by the second, to render possible the total isolation of the hostile column which had pushed forward as far as Királyrév.

The orders for this advance were scarcely issued to the two cavalry divisions, when I received a report that *Királyrév was in the possession of the enemy!*

Soon after the attack of the foremost column of the hostile extreme right wing began in earnest on this village, not being sufficiently convinced that the staff-officer of the second corps who commanded there was to be relied upon, I had sent my adjutant, a captain of cavalry, Charles Kempelen, to the menaced spot, and charged him to take the command of the troops of occupation, and maintain the village at whatever cost.

Kempelen now reported to me, that he had found Királyrév already occupied by the enemy, and our two battalions, with their guns, on the retreat toward the bridge at Aszód. He had succeeded in overtaking, stopping, and leading them again to the storm against Királyrév ; but he nevertheless despaired of regaining the place, unless a strong reinforcement was sent to him.



The required reinforcement, consisting of two battalions and two guns, under the command of the brave Major Rakóvszki (one of the two commanders of infantry divisions of the second corps nominated on the preceding evening), started without delay from the line of battle at Pered for Királyrév ; it being of the utmost importance to come as soon as possible into possession of this point.

After this diminution of our forces opposed to the central point of the hostile battle-array, the execution of the two attacks of cavalry just ordered appeared to be still more pressingly necessary.

On the news that Királyrév was lost, I changed nevertheless my original determination to lead in person the attack of the cavalry division of the third corps on the right wing of the hostile centre ; charged the commander of the cavalry division of the third corps with the accomplishment of this task ; and hastened to Királyrév, before the advancing column under Major Rakóvszki, in order to see with my own eyes whether and how far the line of retreat of the second corps was endangered by the enemy maintaining himself there.

On the preceding evening General Klapka had asked for a squadron of one of the old regiments of hussars, and offered in compensation two squadrons of the newly-formed regiment of "Károlyi" hussars. These had just arrived at Királyrév, when I was reconnoitering the enemy. I found him on the defensive ; opposed to his reserves posted on the north of Királyrév the two squadrons of Károlyi hussars ; and hastened back to Pered, after having finally convinced myself that no hostile advance was to be apprehended from the Great Schütt.

Large clouds of dust suddenly rose and rapidly advanced from Pered toward Zsigárd : they seemed to indicate the flight of the cavalry of the third corps.

I could now, for the present, no longer hope to render possible the advance of the infantry under Kászonyi (second corps) ; I had, on the contrary, speedily to resolve to order that under Leiningen (third corps) back as far as Pered. But Pered had to be maintained with concentrated forces until the news of Nagy-Sándor's successful crossing of the Waag in the rear of the enemy had reached the battle-field, as a moral succor.

The cavalry division of the second corps had just commenced its attack on the hostile turning-column on our left : it might

succeed—that of the third corps be inspired with new courage—Királyrév be retaken from the enemy.

None of these preliminary suppositions—these indispensable conditions for maintaining ourselves at the height of Pered—lay beyond the boundaries of the most common fluctuations of the fortune of war ; none of these suppositions had in itself any particular improbability.

Consequently, while Colonel Leiningen retreated fighting toward Pered, I hastened to assist Colonel Kászonyi in animating to a manly perseverance his division, which had already been pressed back to this place.

But when I arrived at Pered, I found the position I had hoped to maintain already abandoned by the infantry and batteries under Kászonyi, which I had supposed still holding out, and the cavalry division of the third corps, which I thought was in flight, alone still stood its ground. It had, indeed, not succeeded in overthrowing the right wing of the hostile centre ; but *not this cavalry division*, but the greater part of the entire artillery of the second corps, and moreover two of its battalions, had here-upon suddenly taken to flight, and raised those clouds of dust which so rapidly advanced toward Zsigárd. Four Honvéd battalions—the remainder of the infantry of the second corps stationed before Pered—obstructed by Colonel Kászonyi on their onward senseless flight, just at the moment of my arrival at Pered began to rally themselves in the rear of the cavalry division of the third corps, which was again ready to attack.

The western half of Pered and the small wood adjoining it on the north was consequently completely abandoned by us ; the advance of the hostile centre was resolute and vigorous ; the attempt to urge Kászonyi's four battalions again forward, and with them alone reoccupy the quitted points of support, would be evidently, considering the ever uncertain conduct of these troops, unavailing ; and, according to my judgment, under these circumstances, it was useless to think for a moment of further maintaining the battle at the height of Pered ; on the contrary, the retreat of the Leiningen infantry divisions as far as gun-range *behind* Pered was now necessitated.

These divisions had meanwhile retreated into the woods to the northeast and east of Pered, and occupied them. An attack with the bayonet by the hostile centre on the northeast of the wood

had just been repulsed, when Colonel Leiningen received my order to evacuate Pered. His cavalry division, which, as has been mentioned, still continued standing to the west of Pered, supported by the now reorganized four battalions of the second corps, was charged, in order to protect this retreat, to prevent the too speedy pressing forward of the cavalry of the right wing of the hostile centre; the cavalry of the second corps, however, to renew their attacks on the repeatedly-mentioned turning-column of the extreme right wing—which had hitherto been ineffectual, from the uncommonly firm resistance of some Russian battalions—and thus hinder the cavalry division of the third corps, and the four battalions of the second which supported it, from being menaced on the left, and embarrassed in the execution of their task.

Colonel Leiningen began his retreat fighting, during it maintained his troops in exemplary order, drew on his cavalry division, and had his corps just marched up to gun-range south of Pered, when I rejoined him again, for the purpose of arranging with him the following dispositions for the later part of the day :

“The third corps to observe the defensive, and in the worst case fall back as far as Zsigárd; but there to take up the artillery and infantry of the second corps, which had been sent thither from the position before Pered—from want of ammunition, as was subsequently reported to me—and maintain itself firmly until the retaking of Királyrév.

“Colonel Kászonyi at the same time to unite the four battalions of the second corps led back from Pered with its cavalry division; protect with these forces the third corps against being turned in its left, and also keep up the communication with Királyrév.

“As soon as Királyrév becomes ours again, the third corps—reinforced by the above-mentioned artillery and infantry of the second corps—to assume the offensive from Zsigárd, and the remainder of the latter corps from Királyrév.”

I had not yet given up all hopes that the news of General Nagy-Sándor's successful passage over the Waag would soon arrive!

The urgent necessity for accelerating as much as possible the dislodgment of the enemy from Királyrév impelled me again to that point of the battle-field.

It is known that we had already four battalions and four guns



concentrated before Királyrév under the command of Major Rakóvszki.

But however energetically Major Rakóvszki, as well as Captains Kempelen and Nedbal (the commander of one of the battalions present), animated the troops to the combat, the majority of the men, nay even officers, favored by the high corn bounding the village on the south, had unobserved withdrawn from the fight; and of the four battalions I found scarcely one-third in a condition fit for action.

The further attacks on Királyrév, undertaken with such small forces, threatened, like the previous ones, to be unsuccessful. A considerable reinforcement of the storming-columns appeared, above all things, to be necessary. In order to render this possible, however, a regular chase had first to be made after the soldiers, who, dreading the fire, remained hidden in the high corn. All other efforts to force the demoralized troops to obedience had been unavailing; but this last and extreme attempt had the desired effect.

Major Rakóvszki and Captain Kempelen could soon with more considerable forces renew the storming against the southern and southeastern part of Királyrév, while Captain Nedbal with the last remains of his battalion penetrated from the west into the interior of the village. Now began a continuous vigorous contest of *tirailleurs* and artillery. The merit of having decided it victoriously for our arms is mainly due to those three officers.

Királyrév was ours! An orderly officer hastened to Zsigárd, as had been preconcerted, with an order for the third corps to advance. Major Rakóvszki in the mean time pursued the enemy dislodged from Királyrév, drove part of his troops over the Dudvág, and put the remainder to flight toward Alsó-Széllý; Colonel Kászonyi with the four battalions and the cavalry division united under his personal command, who shortly before, in consequence of an unsuccessful attack of the latter, had retreated as far as to the height of Királyrév, was just about again leading his troops to the attack against the right wing of the hostile line of battle, already deployed to the south of Pered and now advancing against Királyrév—when I received a written report from Colonel Leiningen, that he was turned on the right by a strong party of the enemy, was thereby obliged to evacuate his position at Zsigárd, and was forthwith commencing his retreat toward Farkasd.

This report finally convinced me of the absolute necessity of giving up the day as lost, and with it the right bank of the Waag.

My order for the third army corps to advance, which this report had crossed, was now directly countermanded; and Colonel Leiningen was charged to continue his retreat as far as the opposite bank of the Waag.

Colonel Kászonyi had meanwhile attacked with the battery of his cavalry division the hostile forces just mentioned as approaching in the direction from Pered against Királyrév. I had the fire continued, however, only till the return of Major Rakóvszki from the pursuit of the hostile troops dislodged from Királyrév. Immediately after he arrived, the second corps began its retreat toward Aszód, which it accomplished without being disturbed during it by the enemy.

On the other hand, the enemy concentrated in the Great Schütt at Vásárut before nightfall made an attack on the position of General Klapka at Aszód, evidently with the intention of gaining the point of retreat for our second corps, the bridge there over the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube, and by destroying it isolate the second corps on the right bank of the Waag.

But this attack was not begun till after the second corps had in part crossed the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube. The assailant confined his offensive activity to a cannonade, opened in the evening twilight, and briskly continued till darkest night, but which of course was not very dangerous.

Thanks to the firmness with which General Klapka resisted the enemy, the second corps uninterruptedly executed its retreat to the right bank of the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube, and dismantled the bridge it had crossed.

A part of the cavalry and artillery of the corps was immediately dispatched to Aszód, for the purpose of supporting Klapka; with the remainder of them and the infantry the line of battle was elongated on the right from Aszód to the river, a little above the bridge.

Our troops—those under General Klapka as well as those under Colonel Kászonyi—maintained their position. The enemy, convinced at last that his attacks were ineffectual, withdrew again toward Vásárut without having accomplished his purpose.

Aszód was now no longer of any strategic importance to us,

after our offensive had been crippled by the decisive victory which the enemy had gained during the course of the day on the right bank of the Waag.

General Klapka and myself therefore agreed then and there on the evacuation of Aszód also ; which was effected by the troops of the eighth corps (under Klapka) during the same night, by retreating sideways toward Apáczaszakállos on the road from Vásárut to Komorn ; by the second corps, however, not till the following morning (22d of June), by retreating as far as Guta.

The second corps left behind it near Aszód only an outpost to observe the enemy.

I hastened in person on to Guta, with the intention of overtaking early in the morning of the 22d the third corps at Tót-Megyer on the circuit by Naszvad and Neuhäusel.

But in Guta I received the surprising information, that the part of the artillery and infantry of the second corps, which on the preceding day, as is known, had taken to flight from the line of battle before Pered toward Zsigárd, had arrived during the night at the bank of the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube, opposite Guta. The order directing these troops to join in Zsigárd the third corps, had not been able to overtake them on account of the uncommon speed of their uninterrupted further flight from Zsigárd, by Farkasd and Négyed.

The bridge over the Waag at Négyed was overlooked by them in their haste ; and thus they came at last into the desperate condition of being hindered from continuing their flight, on the left by the Waag, on the right by the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube, and in front by the confluence of both, while they had to suppose that the pursuing enemy was in their rear. The latter, however, evidently had no suspicion of all this, otherwise he would undoubtedly have attempted the destruction of these troops. Their transport by boats over the Neuhäusel branch of the Danube to the Guta bank could not be begun till daybreak of the 22d, and lasted, on account of the small capacity of the boats at hand, until late in the forenoon. When it was fairly in progress, I left Guta again, to continue speedily my route to Tót-Megyer.

The second corps, as is known, had not been pursued on its retreat from Királyrév to Aszód ; and this circumstance—added to the uncertainty in which I was as to what had further hap-



pened to the third army corps—created in me the uncomfortable apprehension that the enemy had immediately improved his victory by crossing the lower Waag on the offensive.

If this was the case, then what I judged to be at that moment our greatest danger, namely, the separation of the first corps (General Nagy-Sándor) and the two northern expeditionary columns from the rest of our main army, could be prevented only by the most resolute resistance of the third army corps, and a forced retreat simultaneously executed by the columns threatened with isolation.

Arrived at Tót-Megyer early in the forenoon, I found, however, that what I feared had not taken place.

The enemy had in fact on the preceding evening thrown himself with the far greater part of his forces upon the third corps alone, had pressed it back at Farkasd, and even taken this point; but thereupon had suddenly stopped his advance, no further disturbed the retreat of the third corps across the Waag, only this morning (22d of June) occupied the village of Négyed, and showed no signs of attempting to cross the lower Waag.

But during my stay of several hours in Tót-Megyer, a report arrived from the outposts stationed along the Waag by the third corps, that the principal force of the enemy was marching up the Waag; and I was thereby again confirmed in my former supposition of an offensive movement to be expected at Freystadl and Schintau by a great part of the Austrian army, simultaneously with the invasion of the Russians *en gros*.

The enemy had indeed evacuated on the 21st of June the left bank of the Waag at Schintau, and was forced to confine himself to the defense of the right bank: but this might have been merely a consequence of the necessitated greater concentration of his forces for an attack on our second and third corps at Pered; while the total failure of General Nagy-Sándor's attempts—pretended to have been energetic—at crossing the Waag, undertaken on the same day, left no doubt that the enemy had at his disposal, besides the superior strength with which he had attacked our two corps at Pered, considerable forces opposite Schintau and at Freystadl, which, added to those developed at Pered, made him appear to be in any case strong enough on the Waag to cross it even by himself with a good prospect of success, without having previously to await the advance of the Russian western army,

supposed by us to be behind the corps which had broken into the Arva.

By the unfortunate issue of the battle at Pered, and its serious consequences—the loss of the laboriously prepared passages across the river—suddenly reduced to the defensive, I therefore saw the combination indicated of the greater part of our main army opposite the line on which, according to the data before us respecting the distribution of the hostile forces, their most important concentration was to be expected.

Accordingly the second corps had to march from Guta to Neu-häusel.

I returned in the course of the 22d of June from Tót-Megyer to Guta, to make arrangements for this movement without delay. Its execution, however, considering the isolated condition in which I found the second corps, appeared to me for the present impossible.

The numerical strength of this corps had been reduced, by the losses it had sustained during the last two days, to 5000 men. These losses amounted—as well as I can remember—to nearly 3000 men, besides some guns.

Now the short duration of the engagements at Pered and Alsó-Széllý on the 20th of June—which, truly, had been sustained by the second corps alone—appeared out of all proportion with these losses; and in the battle at Pered on the 21st of June the second army corps—its cavalry division and about three battalions excepted—had throughout not done its duty so conscientiously as the entire third corps, which nevertheless showed no loss of guns, and hardly more than 500 men.

On my return from Tót-Megyer to Guta, I had met near the latter place troops of runaways of the second corps.

This circumstance now revealed to me the real source of the uncommon losses of the second corps. I had moreover reason to apprehend a still further diminution in its numbers, if I made the second corps immediately march again.

Several days' rest seemed to me to be indispensably necessary for the preservation of what remained of it.

The second corps consequently continued until further orders in the camp at Guta; while the third corps meanwhile took up its former position on the Waag.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

IMMEDIATELY after the battle at Aszód, in the night between the 21st and 22d of June, I received—while still in Aszód—the first reports, that several Russian corps had broken into Hungary from Dukla across the northern frontier.

My apprehension, mentioned in the preceding chapter, that the enemy had neglected the pursuit of the second corps from Királyrév as far as Aszód, merely for the purpose of rendering his victory more completely profitable by forthwith crossing the lower Waag, was only still more increased by these reports.

It is well known that I believed I saw as the most dangerous consequence of the apprehended crossing of the river the separation of those parts of our main army from the rest of it which were disposed to the north of the third corps.

So long as this danger existed, I could not leave the theatre of war ; for not having previously thought of the possibility of it, I had neglected to issue, by way of precaution, to the leaders of the independent corps the orders necessary for averting it.

As, however, the enemy had not crossed the lower Waag, but, on the contrary, in the course of the 22d of June moved his main column down the river—a movement by which, again, my original supposition of an offensive intended on his part at Freystadl and Schintau gained probability ; and as the defensive manœuvres of the divers corps for this purpose were partly self-evident, partly had already been indicated ; my personal presence on the theatre of war, as commander-in-chief, seemed also less indispensable for the next few days ; while the very consequences of the dismal reports I had received in Aszód, about the now serious commencement of the Russian invasion *en gros*, imperatively obliged me to hasten to the capitals.

These reports, on a closer consideration—as nothing was heard of a simultaneous advance of Russians from the Arva toward the mountain-towns—led me to the supposition, that the operations of the Russian main force were to be commenced *only* on the line from Dukla by Kaschau.



In this case—with my determination to transfer the scene of the last combat for Hungary to the *right* bank of the Danube—the evacuation of the *left* without delay was necessitated, in spite of the Austrian offensive expected from the Waag.

But at all events these reports still needed confirmation. In the capitals, where all news, from the districts of the operations of those parts of the Hungarian forces which did not belong to the main army, arrived first, I hoped most speedily to be relieved from the painful incertitude to which I had been exposed by those rumors. I had also immediately to endeavor to get Kosuth's consent to confining the last battles to the right bank of the Danube—if the irruption of the Russian main army into Upper Hungary had really taken place.

Early on the 23d of June I left Guta to return to Ofen-Pesth ; but being delayed at Dotis (then the seat of the central office of operations) by the settlement of some business relating to the service which could not be deferred any longer, I did not arrive at the capitals till the 24th.

On the 26th—according to General Vysocki's account of the first important battle which he had fought against the Russians between Eperjes and Kaschau with our northern army, and in consequence of which the latter was obliged in future to retreat without opposition toward Miskolez—no doubt any longer existed that the combined Russian main forces (assumed to be from 60,000 to 70,000 men strong) were advancing irresistibly on the line from Dukla by Kaschau into the interior of the country. Simultaneously there had arrived from Transylvania reports of successive irruptions of considerable Russian corps from the northern and southern confines of the country.

The inroad of the Russian main army into Hungary at once deprived of any practical significance all my efforts for the rehabilitation of the constitution of the year 1848, and against the further continuance of the law of independence of the 14th of April, 1849.

The counter-revolution, no matter whether proceeding from the army or from the Diet, in the face of the extent of country already abandoned, and almost without drawing a blade, before the Russian main army, could no longer elevate itself above the moral level of a *forced repentance*—as I had endeavored to render possible by means of the late unsuccessful offensive against the

Austrians—not to speak of the *want of success*—evident under the conjunctures mentioned—of this “last means of salvation.”

From this time there was but one means left of salvation to Hungary—to vanquish the allied armies of invasion!

Was Hungary of itself equal to this task?

My conviction as a soldier unhesitatingly denied it; and the question “by what means Hungary could yet be saved,” I considered already to be a useless one. As it had long been indeed! And that I had perceived this only now; that, although smiling at the credulity of those who confidently expected help from abroad, I had myself hitherto indulged in suppositions not less improbable, nay had allowed myself to be embarrassed by their influence even in my strategic activity as leader of the main army;—just therein lay the principal cause of the undeniable imperfection of my public conduct after the 14th of April, 1849.

I ought long ago to have perceived that, from the moment when the Austrian army began to console itself with the prospect of Russian aid, there was but one question for the champions of the constitutional rights of Hungary to solve—namely the question of despair, *how* the deadly enemy could most effectively be met by our last convulsive effort.

I ought long ago to have directed all my thoughts and endeavors exclusively to the solution of this one question, indifferent whether the constitution of the year 1848, or the law of independence on the 14th of April, 1849, was the banner under which the last strokes against the original enemy of Hungary should be struck.

Painfully I felt the loss of the months which had passed unimproved.

I now reckoned the existence of Hungary only by weeks.

These at least must not pass unimproved. Even weeks sufficed for the accomplishment of a last desperate resolve.

On the evening of the 26th of June, Kossuth summoned the ministers to deliberate on what was now to be done.

This was the last ministerial council at which I took part as minister of war.

The sitting was commenced by producing the reports which had arrived from Transylvania and Upper Hungary relative to the unexpectedly rapid progress of the Russian arms. The entire contents of these were communicated to the assembly. Here-

upon Kossuth asked what the government should now do—and looked first to *me* for an answer.

“Above all”—thus ran my proposal—“let the government no longer delay to reveal to the people the whole extent of the danger impending over Hungary, were it only that it may not be surprised by the ignominious fate of subjugation during the transport of a premature confidence of victory.

“Simultaneously, however, let the government prepare to answer *personally* for the principle which it has hitherto advocated! Let it give, to the last contest for Hungary’s independence, by its direct participation in it, the true significance of a national self-defense for its very existence! Let it declare itself ambulant, and join the main army, to stand or fall with it.

“Further, let it be convinced of the impossibility of conquering the united Russian and Austrian armies with its present means; and let it begin immediately to concentrate its whole force on the right bank of the Danube for a last stroke against Austria: the advance of the Russian army, on the other hand, let it try to retard only by endeavoring to enter into peaceable negotiations.

“Should the latter fail, let the abandoned parts of the country remain occupied by the Russians.

“If Hungary sinks under the united attacks of Russia and Austria, it is in the end indifferent to which of the two it first falls a prey: but it is not indifferent *which* of the two our last desperate counter-stroke descends upon.

“The rights of the nation were originally assailed by Austria, not by Russia.

“Let the government ponder this; and from this time aim stroke after stroke at Austria alone, so long as the distance of the Russians makes it still possible!”

When I had finished, Kossuth resumed.

He assented unreservedly to the first point of my proposal, namely, no longer to conceal from the nation the danger in which Hungary was involved. The nation, he said, had hitherto at most evinced only a cheap enthusiasm—had done little or nothing for its deliverance. Now let it choose between slavery and manly resistance.

I could not comprehend what Kossuth was aiming at in these surprising attacks on the nation.

In my opinion it had hardly done less than any other people



on earth would have done under similar circumstances. But least of all did it become Kossuth to complain of the nation, or "the people," as he used to express himself. Although as a whole it deserved the blame of always having dreamt more of its invincibility than it had done to confirm it, nevertheless *Kossuth* had no right to pronounce this blame. For it was he himself who had made the people believe that it had but to straighten its scythes and troop together planless, in order to annihilate the enemy.

With regard to the Russians indeed, the people let even the scythes rest. But here also Kossuth could not reproach it: for he himself had officially recommended the exercise of fasting and praying as an especial preservative against the Russians, and had conjured up by this governmental measure the discouraging illusion, that the Russians were something similar to pestilence and famine, against which nothing could be effected by defensive weapons.

I was consequently, as I have said, in the dark as to the object which Kossuth had in view—considering the unexampled submission of the nation to his will—in his unexpected attacks upon it. It appeared as if he had begun to speak *for* my proposal; which, however, contained only the three following demands:

1. The enlightenment of the nation as to the true state of the affairs of Hungary;
2. The *personal* responsibility of Kossuth and the ministers for the principle of the deliverance of the people;
3. A last desperate stroke at Austria.

What was the object of Kossuth's attacks upon the nation, in the face of these three demands?

Did he feel, perhaps, merely an urgent necessity for relieving his oppressed heart in some way? Or,

Were these attacks intended to lead to the conclusion that the nation did not deserve Kossuth to be personally responsible for its cause?

I feared the latter—I do not deny it. My still-fresh recollection of Kossuth's winter journey from Pesth to behind the Theiss justified me in this.

My determination was taken, in case Kossuth should betray a longing for a similar summer journey—and I awaited quietly the fate of my proposal.

Kossuth seemed to be about to attack with all the weapons of his oratory the nation, which had so suddenly fallen into dispute with him. He was just beginning with a not flattering apostrophe on it—when suddenly his valet entered with two good-sized bottles of beer, and apparently undecided which of the ministerial gentlemen he should first serve.

“What means this!” exclaimed Kossuth, stopping short in his severe remarks on the people, and angrily ordering the bewildered Ganymede out of the room.

I had unintentionally been the cause of this disturbing intermezzo; for just before the session of the ministerial council began, I had complained in the ante-chamber of extreme thirst. I certainly did not thereby intend that the drink should be served to me during the conference, and moreover in such an immoderate quantity. Nevertheless I thought I ought to take the blame of the annoying interruption on myself.

Kossuth, in consequence of my self-accusation, showed himself speedily appeased. He might, moreover, have felt himself, as regarded the ministers assembled in his dwelling, bound to fulfill the duties of a host toward his guests: and forthwith had more generous liquor, together with a corresponding luncheon, brought in.

The serious, taciturn council of ministers was speedily metamorphosed into a lively improvised soirée of men. The gloomy disposition of the former was suddenly changed into the cheerful, almost frivolous one of the latter. Kossuth did not resume his tirade against the people, but declared without more ado that he agreed in all points with my proposal. Several of the ministers did the same after him. My proposal was not rejected—and yet I lacked the inward conviction that Kossuth and the majority of the ministers were in earnest in the adoption of it, not to speak of its resolute execution.

I lacked this inward conviction, because—in the face of the frivolity with which the majority of the speakers had discussed a question on which depended the only thing that still remained to be saved, *the honor of the nation*—I could not get rid of the suspicion, that I owed the favorable result of the deliberation in respect of my proposal, mainly to the officiousness of the above-mentioned valet and its inspiring consequences.

When I left the capitals next day—never again to set foot in them—the presentiment accompanied me, that Kossuth and the

majority of the ministers would deny by their actions, what they had promised me in the evening conference of the 26th of June.

At all events I was resolved to concentrate the main army on the right bank of the Danube, and strike the intended last stroke at the Austrians, should it even be with the latter alone.

The Austrians, however, had meanwhile concentrated themselves on the right bank of the Danube; and when I arrived on the 27th of June at the central office of operations in Dotis, I found the concentration of our main army on the Danube right bank, which I had resolved upon offensively, already in process as a necessitated defensive measure. Nay, even as a defensive measure it appeared to have been taken rather late for the maintenance of the line of the Raab.

The movement of the Austrians from the left to the right bank of the Danube had not, so far as I know, been foreseen either by me or by any body else in the Hungarian camp: but that this was the case became evident—from the information of scouts and the reports of the commanders detached on the Waag and the Great Schütt—only after it had been executed, and that the Austrians were already advancing to attack Pöltenberg and Kmety's positions on the Raab.

The latter was concentrated at Marczaltö, from four to five (German) miles south of Raab. It is known that, in case of being attacked and defeated, the capitals had been indicated as his place of retreat. But a change ought to have been made in this arrangement in consequence of my last resolutions, and General Kmety, even in the worst case, ought to have remained united with General Pöltenberg.

However, in the evening of the 27th a report arrived at Dotis, that an Austrian corps had crossed the river Raab between Raab and Marczaltö in the course of the day, and advanced as far as the line of communication between the Kmety division and the seventh corps. The Kmety division seemed thereby to be already separated from the seventh corps; the position of the latter before and near Raab to be turned on the left; and a direct concentrated attack on it was to be expected on the following day.

Early on the 28th I left Dotis for Raab. When I arrived there, I found the position of the seventh corps to the west of Raab already vigorously attacked. General Pöltenberg had even abandoned his first position—an hour's distance from Raab *à cheval*



of the Wieselburg main road and the little river Rabnitz—and retreated into the second, about half the distance nearer to Raab; because here, from its being less extensive, it was in General Pöltenberg's power to resist more energetically the hostile attacks with those forces which remained to him for the direct defense of Raab, after he had perceived the necessity of disposing a great part of his troops on the Pápa road.

For already, in the night between the 26th and 27th of June, General Pöltenberg—on the first news that the communication between his corps in Raab and the Kmety division in Marczaltő was endangered by an apprehended crossing over the river Raab at Móriczhida—had marched two battalions, four squadrons, and a battery to Tét to preserve it.

This column reached Tét about noon of the 27th of June, but found there two companies of the tenth Honvéd battalion belonging to the Kmety division. These troops, having formed the protection of the extreme right flank of the division, had been separated from it by a hostile column, which, advancing from Edenburg, on the morning of that day had already effected its passage at Móriczhida. They were just now retreating to Raab, in order to join the seventh corps.

The declarations of the officers of these two companies respecting the strength of the enemy, and the assurance that, immediately after crossing the river, he had taken the direction toward Tét—caused the commander of the column of the seventh corps at once to march back again as far as Szemere.

In consequence of this information, General Pöltenberg now dispatched to Szemere, in the night between the 27th and 28th of June, one of the commanders of his infantry divisions, with the remainder of the division to which the two battalions already there belonged, reinforced by some squadrons. Considering the offensive movements of the enemy, which were meanwhile remarked on the Wieselburg main road, and menaced the front of Pöltenberg's position before Raab, it did not seem advisable to send thither more considerable forces.

Pöltenberg's whole force—consisting of the seventh corps, and a column of the eighth corps several days previously sent to Raab by General Klapka, in all about 11,000 men and forty guns—was consequently early on the 28th distributed on two points, nearly two miles and a half distant from each other.

Namely, about two-thirds (the right wing), under Pöltenberg's personal command, stood *à cheval* of the Wieselburg main road and the Rabnitz, for the defense of the town against the western (principal) attack of the enemy ; the remainder (the left wing), led by the above mentioned commander of an infantry division of the seventh corps, stood at Szemere, and was charged—for the purpose of re-establishing the communication with the Kmety division—to attack the hostile corps which had arrived on the preceding evening at Tét, and if possible drive it from the Pápa road and back across the Raab.

The hostile corps, however, on the morning of the 28th anticipated the attack of our left wing. Almost simultaneously its commander received from the post of intelligence appointed to observe the line of the river between Raab and the height of Szemere a report that a hostile column, which had crossed the Raab at Babót, was advancing in the direction of Ménfő. The commander of the left wing consequently saw himself obliged to lead his troops from Szemere back to Ménfő, in order to prevent being himself separated from Raab. Still he was obliged to fight for some time during his retreat, as he was already attacked by the enemy coming from Tét, and was now hotly pursued part of his way. In Ménfő he intended to offer a more resolute resistance.

General Pöltenberg was already aware of all these unfavorable events, when I arrived at Raab and spoke with him. He nevertheless still entertained a hope that his left wing would be able at Ménfő to put a stop to the further advance of the enemy, until the succor which was expected from Komorn should arrive on the battle-field.

I had, however, become convinced that this succor, consisting of the second army corps and a small part of the eighth, would at most be able to reach Gönyő in the course of the day, and could consequently think of a further holding of Raab only in case of an uncommonly favorable success to our arms at Ménfő.

I accordingly left to Pöltenberg the further defense of Raab, and hastened to undertake personally the conduct of the battle at Ménfő. But while on my way thither I met a hussar with a written report from the commander of the left wing, that the unfortunate issue of a short engagement at Ménfő had obliged him to enter on his retreat toward Szabadhegy. Under these circum-

stances, the town of Raab with its suburbs—even irrespective of the superior force with which the enemy had meanwhile commenced his attacks on it—could no longer be maintained; because through the retreat of the left wing from Ménfő to Szabadhegy, Pöltenberg with the right wing before Raab, by staying longer there, risked the loss of his line of retreat.

He accordingly received my order to evacuate Raab without delay, and lead his troops back as far as behind the Pigeon, an inn so named on the Komorn road.

While he executed this order with the right wing, the left was directed from Szabadhegy to Hecse.

From the latter point and the Pigeon inn I ordered the retreat in the direction of Acs in two columns, for the present as far as to the height of Gönyö.

General Klapka, who meanwhile had arrived from Komorn, led the left wing by Szent-Iván to Szent-János; General Pöltenberg the infantry and artillery of the right wing to Gönyö; while with the greatest part of the cavalry and a battery I took charge of the protection of the retreat.

The enemy pursued us as far as about the height of the eastern point of the Little Schütt.

The extraordinary numerical superiority which the Austrians had displayed during the course of the day caused me to determine to avoid as much as possible any decisive conflict until the concentration of our main army on the right bank of the Danube was completely effected; in the worst case—that is, if the Austrians, improving their victory, should advance without delay—to retreat with all the disposable troops on the right bank of the Danube into the fortified camp opposite Komorn; to confine myself to maintaining it; and not till the last division of the main army had come from the left to the right bank of the Danube to put forth our whole strength in a counter-stroke against the Austrians.

Accordingly, before daybreak on the 29th of June the seventh and second corps (the latter, if I mistake not, had with great difficulty reached Gönyö in the course of the 28th, together with the columns of the eighth corps, left their bivouacs at Gönyö and Szent-János, and continued their retreat as far as Acs; and on the 30th—having left outposts at Acs—arrived at the fortified camp.

A detachment of cavalry was sent to Nagy-Igmánd to observe the enemy on the Fleischhauer road, and obtain intelligence



about the Kmety division, to which, on the evening of the 28th, had sent an order from Raab by Szent-Márton to retreat to Komorn by Román and Kis-Bér.

This detachment of cavalry, however, by the approach of a hostile corps had been forced in the course of the 30th of June to leave Nagy-Igmánd; whereupon it retreated toward the fortified camp.

The advanced troops of different corps at Acs had been ordered to evacuate this point and the line of the brook Czoncezó only in the face of a superior enemy; and in this case to occupy that spur of the forest of Acs which lies between Acs and the fortified camp, and extends to the south toward Pusztá-Harkály.

Now this was not done by the commander of these advanced troops.

For as, on the 30th of June, the approach of strong hostile columns toward Acs, simultaneously with the advance against Nagy-Igmánd, had obliged him to abandon the Czoncezó line, he also evacuated immediately the spur of the Acs forest, and hastened—without sending us previous intelligence—to reach the interior of the fortified camp, because he had taken the detachment of cavalry which was retreating at the same time from Nagy-Igmánd toward Komorn for a hostile one, and feared being intercepted by it.

The enemy coming from Acs followed him closely, and thus came into possession of the forest-spur without striking a blow.

It was important now to regain it, in which we succeeded without much difficulty, the enemy offering no great resistance, but after a short contest with artillery again returning to Acs.

Our advanced troops occupied the forest-spur, leaning to the right on the Danube, to the left—surrounding in a wide circuit the fortified camp—on the little town of O-Szőny.

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## CHAPTER LXIV.

“STROKE upon stroke at Austria alone!” This was—I repeat it—after the invasion of the Russians *en gros*, the sole, last task for all parties in Hungary: the *possibility* or the *impossi-*

*bility* of a victorious issue of the combat was the only point that admitted of discussion.

In the first instance, Kossuth had to avenge his declaration of independence, Szemere his republic, and the unfortunate defenders of the constitution of the year 1848 their constitution, and this less on Russia than on Austria.

In the next, the plan which would most surely effect this object would be, to destroy first of all the hostile army that stood nearest to the centre-point of our collective forces—consequently the Austrian—and not till we had succeeded in this to fall on the Russians for the same purpose.

This plan—considering the position of the hostile main army, and the probable advance of the Russians during our operations against the Austrians—had but the *one* disadvantage, that it endangered the line of retreat to the neutral territory of Turkey.

But Kossuth—without whose assent the energetic execution of this plan remained indeed only a pious wish—of his own free conviction had already, on the 14th of April, 1849, destroyed the bridge behind the whole nation, and thereby justified the expectation, which was but an honorable one to him, that he himself no longer set any particular value on the said line of retreat.

The proposal which I made in the ministerial council on the 26th of June was consequently in some measure a compromise, offered by me—who believed the salvation of Hungary to be impossible—in the name of the defenders of the constitution of 1848 to the founder of independent Hungary with an undefined form of government (*Kossuth*), and to the discoverer of the republican element in Hungary (*Szemere*), who both still maintained their belief in the possibility of the salvation of the fatherland.

The compromise was accepted; however, as is known, under extraordinary influences, and in a manner not calculated to inspire me with confidence in the sincerity of those who accepted it.

And if on the 26th of June—on which day Kossuth and Szemere could scarcely have a presentiment of the offensive threatening us on the Danube right bank on the part of the Austrians—it already seemed as if these gentlemen were *not in earnest* respecting the execution of my proposals—on the 29th I could unfortunately be quite sure of it.

For, after the events of the action on the 28th, related in the preceding chapter, the government ought immediately to have re-

moved from Pesth to Komorn. However, the request to allow himself, if necessary, even to be shut up in Komorn had, as is well known, been very positively rejected by Kossuth at the end of April ; and at the end of June, in the face of far more critical circumstances, truly a not more favorable reception awaited the same request.

The state of affairs seemed consequently to be almost the same as if my proposal, made in the ministerial council on the 26th of June, had been forthwith rejected ; in which case—as has been mentioned—I had already, by way of precaution, come to the fixed determination to attempt *with the main army alone* the performance of the one duty which in my opinion, was common to all parties in Hungary.

A perception of the duty of defending Hungary's last honor—of preventing its fall from being completely inglorious, led me to this resolution.

Considering the perplexity which had so suddenly manifested itself with regard to the question of the defense of the country, on the invasion of the Russians *en gros*, the danger of an inglorious fall really existed. But this danger, in my opinion, and judged from a national-military point of view, lay principally in the great probability of an uninterrupted victorious continuance of the just-commenced offensive of the Austrians ; in case no advantage should be taken of the favorable opportunity offered at Komorn of forcing the defensive *once more* upon them, before the Russians could prevent it.

My firm resolve to remain even with the main army alone at Komorn, was consequently, it is true, not founded on the hope of thereby preventing the fall of Hungary, but nevertheless on the twofold conviction :

That the main army, mindful of its duty to the country, for the rights of which it had become surety, was bound by its own honor to yield to the Austrians only after the most desperate resistance ;—and

That our offensive retaliation on the Austrians could not make itself so powerfully felt on any other point of the country as at Komorn.

Even on the 29th of June, however, I was not actually convinced of the impossibility of succeeding in uniting the troops of General Vysocki, which were retreating before the Russians, with



the main army on the right bank of the Danube ; or, more correctly, of inducing Kossuth to come himself to Komorn ; for unless I succeeded in *this*, the former project, as may be conceived, would likewise be impracticable.

I had indeed no favorable result to expect from a renewed written detail of the reasons for my proposal made in the ministerial council on the 26th of June, considering that Kossuth had so decidedly declared his antipathy to the chance of being shut up in Komorn by the enemy ; nevertheless I still hoped that Kossuth's sense of honor would react, and decide him to join the main army, if I—assuming as self-evident my determination that the final decision should take place on the right bank of the Danube, as well as his refusal to share the fate of the main army—were openly to recommend to him the salvation of his own person by flight.

This I accordingly did. At the conclusion of my short report on the loss of the line of the Raab, and the insufficiency of the forces then at our disposal for the direct protection of the capitals, I advised Kossuth at once to transfer the government—if Komorn did not suit it—from Pesth to Grosswardein ; on which occasion I did not leave him in the dark either as to the determination I have expressed, nor as to the resignation with which I intended to persevere in it.

Kossuth, however, did not come to Komorn ; only his bitter complaint reached it, that I could not find a less insecure abode for him than the city of Grosswardein, which might be taken within a few days and without impediment by the Russians posted on the Upper Theiss.

In this Kossuth was certainly right ; but I confess that this complaint, equally naïve as well-founded, was the last thing I should have expected. And the sad consequences of this sorrowful surprise perplexed or enlightened (the choice between these two expressions I leave to the reader) my judgment in such a manner, that harmonious co-operation with Kossuth appeared to me even in the last stages of our public action to be just as impossible as it would be to go hand in hand with two men, one of whom was ready to answer personally at any time and under all circumstances for his actions and any of their results, while the other endeavored in every way to escape the inconvenient consequences of his deeds.

The following event also contributed essentially to that enlightening or perplexing of my judgment.

On the 29th of June, while my letter to Kossuth above mentioned was already on its way to the capitals, and I was in Acs taking the necessary measures for the further retreat into the fortified camp, two civilian officials suddenly arrived there for the purpose of burning down the village in virtue of their office. They declared they had been charged to do so by some government commissary, and moreover referred to a decree of the government, which had hitherto remained unknown to me, according to which a similar fate awaited all the habitations in the country, so soon as they had to be evacuated by our troops when retreating before the enemy.

Something similar, though more limited in its extent, had already happened in December, 1848.

The reader is aware that at the beginning of our retreat from the Lajtha toward the capitals, all the stores of hay and corn between Wieselburg and Raab lying nearest to the main road were destroyed by fire.

These devastations commenced experimentally (as we have seen, they were not continued further than to Raab) were perhaps excusable, on the one hand by the intention to delay the advance of the enemy; on the other by the illusion, which had gained the ascendancy, that the rural population were determined for ever to bid farewell to their habitations on the approach of the Austrians, or in other words, that we stood at the opening of a new age of the migration of tribes.

It is notorious, however, that the people evinced very little disposition for migration; and on this account it appeared to be unjustifiable to persist in carrying out the plan of devastation, erroneously introduced to further the defense of the country.

Of this Kossuth himself had been undoubtedly convinced in December, 1848; otherwise he would probably have steadily continued the work of destruction, without paying much attention to my remonstrances. The little national desire for migrating that existed among his fellow-citizens was from that time consequently no secret to him; and within the six months that had since elapsed, the views of the country people with reference to the value of their immovable property could scarcely have been suf-

ficiently changed to justify the conflagration-decree of the provisional Governor of Hungary.

I could therefore neither bring this decree into a causal connection with the friendliness of his manner of thinking and acting toward the people, so wearisomely-often asseverated, nor with his belief in the possibility of saving Hungary.

But even apart from this circumstance, I could not discover either the *particular* beneficial result to be attained by this decree and its consequences, nor in general *any one* that would have been sufficient to justify such a means.

My conviction of the moral impossibility of a further agreement between myself and Kossuth was consequently to my own mind indisputable, and it urged me undisguisedly to declare to him in a letter dated from Komorn, the 30th of June, that the object of my contests up to this time had not been to further the interests of the government, but of the nation, and that I should be the first to lay down my arms, if I saw that *this object* would thereby be attained.

Before, however, I could receive Kossuth's answer to this declaration, I was surprised by the official oral intelligence from three deputies of the government (the minister of communication Csányi, General Aulich, and Field-marshal Lieut. Kiss), that it had been decided in the ministerial council, that the main army should move back as speedily as possible from Komorn to Ofen. And Csányi—effectively supported by Aulich, still more effectively by those friendly sentiments which I entertained toward these two men—succeeded in soon changing my opinions so much, that I gave up the resolution I had already formed to bring about the final decision at Komorn; nay I even thought I was bound no longer to adhere to my conviction of the moral impossibility of a further co-operation with Kossuth.

For Csányi and Aulich—thanks to the very noble mode of their thinking and acting, which they had proved in many ways—possessed my confidence in so high a degree, that their decidedly espousing the side of the government was felt by me as a reproach; and it now suddenly appeared to me that I had wronged Kossuth when I supposed—although supported by his conflagration-decree and his suspicious delay in joining the main army—that he had in view besides his own personal safety only the total devastation of Hungary—it is all one with what intention.



Accordingly I gave to the deputies of the government my sincerely intended promise to carry into effect the resolution of the ministerial council as speedily as possible.

And the deputies immediately returned to Pesth.

The position of the main army (the Kmety division excepted, which, it is known, had been separated from it) on the 1st of July, 1849, was as follows :

The second, third, and seventh corps were united in the fortified camp opposite Komorn ; the first corps at Neuhausel and the river Neutra upward ; the expeditionary column of the seventh army corps in Verebély and Neutra ; while the expeditionary column under Major Armin Görgei, the outposts of which had meanwhile been pressed back from the upper Waag toward the district of the mountain-towns by detachments of the Russian corps occupying the Arva, left Perk and Neusohl on the above-mentioned day, in order to effect without delay, conformably to the last received dispositions, its retreat to Komorn.

The march of our main army from Komorn to Ofen (to say the least, a daring enterprise—though perhaps not positively hopeless—in the face of the Austrian army posted on the Czenczó), in consequence of the above-indicated dislocations, which the chief of the central office of operations had fully communicated in my presence to the deputies of the government, could not by any means be commenced before the 3d of July, and even then only on condition that the two expeditionary columns (together amounting to about 5000 men and ten guns) should be destined, as a reinforcement of the garrison of Komorn, to remain separate from the main army.

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## CHAPTER LXV.

THE fortified camp on the right bank of the Danube, opposite Komorn, since the 26th of April (the day of the complete relief of Komorn) had been restored, nay, partly strengthened by new works.

The most important of these was a strong redoubt, erected on

the sand-hill which rises to the south in front of the *tête-de-pont* of the Danube, and held the place of the former object No. 8.

(All the objects in the fortified curve were designated by the continuous numbers from 1 to 10, commencing from the right point of support of the camp, the elevation of the bank above Uj-Szőny—the Monostor or Sandberg.)

The other new erections consisted of some earth-works open in the gorge, thrown up before the extreme right wing of the camp (objects 1 and 2).

Of the corps united since the 30th of June in this camp (together scarcely 25,000 men, with about 120 guns), the part of the eighth corps which was present (four battalions) occupied the objects on the Monostor Nos. 1, 2, and 3, as well as the open works advanced to these objects; the seventh corps, under General Pöltenberg, the objects 4, 5, 6, and 7; finally, the third corps under General Leiningen, the objects 8, 9, and 10, besides the *tête-de-pont* and the little town of O-Szőny, situated down the river; while the second corps, under Colonel Kászonyi, remained *en réserve* in the interior of the camp.

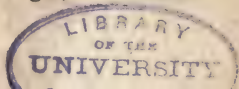
The Austrians, reinforced—as we learned from a Russian soldier taken prisoner on the 1st of July—by the Russian corps which had been opposed to us in the engagement at Pered on the 21st of June, had occupied the line of the Czonczó since the 30th of June.

Early in the morning of the 2d of July they advanced toward our camp.

The commanders of our outposts nevertheless omitted to forward intelligence of it to the head-quarters (town of Komorn). They probably supposed there was no serious intention on the part of the enemy.

Accordingly General Klapka and myself were informed of the menacing movement only by the cannonade commenced in consequence of it on the Monostor. Meeting on the way into the camp, we agreed immediately that *he* should take the chief conduct of the impending combat on the left wing (within the range of the third corps), *I* that in the centre and on the right wing (within the range of the seventh corps and of the troops from the Komorn garrison).

Urged by the necessity of knowing as quickly as possible from ocular inspection the state of affairs in our ranges, we rode at



first together between the objects 7 and 8 beyond the line of the camp, and parted only when outside of it ; General Klapka turning to the left toward O-Szőny, I to the right toward the Monostor.

The advance from Mocsá and Csém of extended hostile lines was to be remarked. They were, however, still far out of gun-range of our trenchers. The extreme right wing of the enemy—pushed forward toward O-Szőny—menaced this point, and was just then attacked by a part of the cavalry division of the third corps.

But the battle beginning at the Monostor appeared to be far more active than that here.

While riding in a wide circuit round the fortified line, I now hastened toward the Monostor, and saw that the enemy developed very considerable forces, apparently preparatory to a direct attack also on our camp before Harkály and the southern spur of the forest on the river-bank, which extends between the brook Czönczó and the vineyards of the Monostor along the Danube.

Our outposts had both returned from Harkály and the southern forest-spur into the interior of the camp. But the enemy did not seem to be by any means satisfied with this result ; and however incredible the supposition might be, that he intended a serious attack on our fortified camp, the impetuous advance of his extreme left wing from the forest by the river-bank against our point of support on the Monostor, backed, as I saw it was, by the simultaneous advance from the southern forest-spur, in the direction of Harkály, Csém, and Mocsá, seemed nevertheless to justify this supposition.

Being in possession of an uncommonly strong position, as ours was in the fortified camp, and in the face of an unmistakable superiority in the hostile forces developed offensively within our horizon, it would, in my opinion, be our wisest course to await in a purely defensive attitude the attack which, as I have remarked, seemed already energetically begun against the Monostor.

The offensive measures, however, which had been taken on our part at the Monostor before my arrival there, showed that, during my absence, a contrary opinion with regard to tactics had probably prevailed.

In order, namely, to drive the enemy out of the vineyards and the forest by the river-bank, the greater part of the four battalions of the Komorn garrison had already been advanced ; and to



support this sally energetically, other four battalions of the seventh corps had been disposed, partly in the vineyards themselves, partly on the ground bounding them to the south, between the latter and the main road to Acs, on the left before the first intrenched line.

This instantaneous offensive demeanor certainly appeared to be justified by the prospect of repelling the attack of the *extreme* left wing of the enemy, which had pressed forward alone, before the hostile *inner* left wing and the centre could have advanced at the same height of attack against the objects intrusted to the seventh corps.

But the employment of infantry alone, without the co-operation of the other two principal arms, especially artillery, was not adapted to the purpose; and the disposition of the battalions of the seventh corps in the free and open ground between the vineyards and the main road to Acs, beyond the effective reach of the artillery of the camp, and in the face of the enemy advancing with all three arms, was completely disastrous to our troops only.

When I, returning by the main road to Acs into the camp, reached the Monostor, the injurious consequences of the isolated advance of these eight battalions had already become sensibly felt, as was evident from a report of my younger brother to the commander of his corps, General Pöltenberg, which had arrived almost simultaneously with myself in the camp. (The battalion commanded by my brother was one of those which were disposed on the open ground to the south of the vineyards).

On the part of the enemy—thus ran the report—a rocket-battery and two of field-pieces were now in full activity, whereby the battalions on the open ground were hard pressed, while those in the vineyards (our *extreme* right wing) had already been obliged to give way.

On hearing this, I hastened forward into the vineyards, intending if possible to renew the combat, or at least prevent a disbanding.

While riding with this intention through the foremost open earthworks, I found them, to my comfort, already sufficiently strongly occupied by the part of the advanced four Komorn battalions which had been kept back *en réserve*, to guarantee their being held even in the most unfavorable case, that is, though our storming columns should be completely defeated.

At about half gun-range distance from this intrenched line I encountered a wide-extended troop of fugitives. Their number scarcely amounted to half a battalion. The exertions of my ever-brave suite speedily put a stop to their flight. This was the easier, as the hostile batteries posted to the left before us (on the open ground to the south of the vineyards) had just directed their fire principally against the earthworks in our rear, consequently cannonaded but slightly the line on which we threw ourselves (my suite and myself) against the disbanded troop; there was also no enemy visible in front of us at this moment. Next minute, however, the foremost of the hostile *tirailleurs* emerged from behind the nearest elevation of the undulating ground, from 150 to 200 paces before us, advancing at storming speed with crossed bayonets. We were in vain endeavoring to animate the troop—which had scarcely been brought to a stand—to a counter-enterprise similar to that of the enemy. After a few seconds they again took to flight, and this time could not be stopped; they did not, however, take the former direction toward the intrenchments, but laterally to the Danube.

The Danube, when of its ordinary depth, leaves at the foot of the high and steep declivities of the Monostor a way along its bank, used as a towing-path, which is on an average as broad as an ordinary road. On the 2d of July, 1849, its waters did not rise uncommonly high.

The Komorn battalions—shaken and discouraged by the brisk fire of artillery and the resolute attack of infantry on the part of the enemy—when fleeing over the steep declivities of the Monostor down to the towing-path had undeniably made a very fortunate choice as regarded their preservation from the attacks of the enemy. The path was obliquely commanded by a battery, erected on the upper point of the so-called *Kriegsinsel* ('island of war'), this point lying between the Monostor and the left point of support of the opposite outwork, the Palatinal line; so that an advance along this path was rendered uncommonly difficult to the enemy.

The greater part of the advanced Komorn battalions was already in security, that is, on the towing-path, when I arrived with my attendants in haste, intending to renew the combat in the vineyards. The troop which had been interrupted by us in its speedy retreat to the intrenched line was only the small

remnant of these battalions. Its suddenly taking the direction toward the bank of the Danube betrayed to us the common asylum of the rest.

We hastened to the brink of the declivity, which was almost inaccessible on horseback, and a single glance down on the towing-path deep below us convinced me of the uselessness of any further attempt to bring back the disobedient battalions to their duty by merely summoning them.

Thronged close together between the Danube and the declivity, they fled unobstructed down the stream.

The vineyards situated in front of the first intrenched line were consequently completely evacuated by us, and this intrenched line itself was menaced in a direct manner by the assault of the hostile storming-columns of infantry.

But knowing that this line was strongly manned, I believed it to be sufficiently secured, even without my personal co-operation, at least until I should have succeeded in putting a stop to the above-mentioned flight, the pernicious influence of which upon the behavior of our troops generally I feared above all.

It might be foreseen that this could only be successfully accomplished while the fleeing masses were still in the defile formed by the Danube and the steep declivities of the Monostor. Thither I now hastened in advance of the fugitives—taking my way over the Monostor across the two intrenched lines—had very speedily two pieces of artillery planted in the prolongation of the defile, and then returned again to the Monostor.

Not far from object No. 1, and a little behind it, the brink of the declivity projects toward the Danube. Here I was visible to the fleeing masses in the defile, as well as to the commander of the two guns on the outlet of it, who awaited my signal to fire.

In the mean time the battalions of the seventh corps—(among which was also that under the command of my younger brother), which had been advanced, like those of Komorn, but to the left behind them along the southern border of the vineyards and on the adjoining open ground—had also retreated out of the effective range of the hostile artillery, passing by the left flank of the first intrenched line in the direction of object No. 3 of the second line;—while I erroneously supposed that these battalions, fleeing across by the vineyards of the Danube had saved themselves



at the same time with those of Komorn over the steep declivities of the Monostor down to the towing-path.

I was completely confirmed in this error by observing a Honvéd officer on horseback joining in the flight of these battalions, whose horse happened to resemble in color that of my younger brother.

In consequence of this error I felt myself much shaken in my determination to drive this coward troop together with grape-shot, and resolved once more to entertain the hope that it would perhaps still be possible to succeed without making use of this extreme measure.

But all repeated attempts to obtain this by exhortations or menaces having, as hitherto, proved unsuccessful; further, the sudden beginning of an uncommonly brisk fire of musketry on the foremost line of intrenchments leaving no doubt of the energetic earnestness of the hostile attack on the Monostor; and finally, having to expect as the nearest consequence of the general concentrated offensive movement of the enemy—observed by myself—against our fortified camp, similar attacks on all points of it, and that the certainty of opposing them every where successfully seemed to me very problematical if these coward masses were allowed to disperse themselves in the interior of the camp, and recruit from among the rest of the troops partisans for the standard of the hare;—it was, in the view of the perilous situation in which the army must be placed by a defense of the fortified camp deficient in valor, the command of an iron necessity to become master at any price of these refractory masses.

Resigned to what was unavoidable, I gave the signal for firing to the commander of the two guns placed at the outlet of the defile.

Half way through it they attempted to continue their flight. Deterred by the effective discharge of a body of infantry of the reserve, which had been speedily dispatched thither, they now completely ascended the declivity, and arrived on the ground situated directly behind objects Nos. 1 and 2, where a detachment of hussars was ready to charge them, in order to drive them without further ceremony again forward to the first line of intrenchments.

I already believed that the moment of greatest danger to the army from the flight of the Komorn battalions was almost past,

when all at once the rest of these battalions (the troops occupying the first line of intrenchments), falling back *en débandade* through the interval between objects Nos. 1 and 2 into the interior of the camp, abandoned to the on-storming enemy, simultaneously with the first line of intrenchments, the objects mentioned on the *second* line likewise.

The detachment of hussars in fact fell immediately on both parties of the Komorn battalions, drove them forward again to the abandoned objects, and thereby forcibly obtained the momentary security of the most important point of our position. But the *first* line of intrenchments was already occupied by the enemy; and the recovery of it by storm was too essential and too imperative a service to be intrusted to the dubious valor of those battalions which had just now been obliged to be compelled by disgraceful coercive measures to the most necessary fulfillment of their duty.

I consequently charged with the accomplishment of this task the 48th battalion, ordered to advance from the reserve (the second corps at Uj-Szőny).

Led by its former commander, the valiant Major Rakóvszki (commander of an infantry division of the second corps), the brave battalion executed its advance in the hottest fire of the enemy, without stopping, to about 100 paces from the point of attack. The enemy did not hold out longer in the earthworks which he had shortly before taken by storm; the resolute attack of the 48th battalion was now changed into a vigorous pursuit; and as the lines of the hostile centre and right wing, which were deployed before Csém and Mocsa, had meanwhile not attacked our camp, the moment seemed not unfavorable for reacting with strength and energy against the left wing of the enemy, which had advanced singly.

Accordingly, while the 48th battalion drove before it in the vineyards the enemy just dislodged from the first line of intrenchments, Major Rakóvszki dispatched after them the remaining battalions of his division; General Pöltenberg debouched with the seventh corps, partly on the main road to Acs, partly to the south of it; the infantry on the right wing, joining the Rakóvszki division—the cavalry on the left in echelons toward Csém and Mocsa—in the centre the batteries of the infantry divisions.

The hostile column, far advanced between the main road to

Acs and the vineyards at the Monostor, now quickly turned in toward the southern spur of the forest at the river bank. Before the open ground between this forest-spur and Harkály, the main body of the hostile left wing (those corps which menaced our camp from Acs) steadily awaited the attack of Pöltenberg's artillery.

Here an active conflict of artillery now commenced, the issue of which remained doubtful until the advance of our infantry in the forest at the river-bank enabled us to plant two guns in the left prolongation of the line of the hostile artillery, whereby it would be taken in file, and with the simultaneous advance of our guns be forced to retreat.

In the mean time the lines of the hostile centre and right wing, the attacks of which on our camp I feared were to be expected every moment during the critical situation at the Monostor, had completely withdrawn from our view.

This circumstance—alike favorable and in itself enigmatical to us—put it in our power, as we shall see, immediately to improve the advantages we had just obtained.

By this circumstance, namely, the corps of the reserve—the second (instead of the infantry of the Rakóvski division, the four Komorn battalions remained behind in the camp), which had hitherto had to secure the objects of the defense-line of the camp, that had been quitted by the seventh corps, against any attacks of the hostile centre and right wing—relieved from this now superfluous precaution, could be employed on the open field in augmenting our tactic superiority opposite to the hostile left wing—at least in part, as our left wing under General Klapka must nevertheless not be denuded of his reserve.

General Pöltenberg thus received a considerable reinforcement of artillery, and at the same time an order to continue with increased energy his attacks on the already visibly shaken left wing of the enemy, which was now separated by a great distance from the other corps.

In part to destroy the latter, if possible, before a hostile succor could arrive at the place of battle—was the primary object of this effort; the secondary was—to obtain thereby for the next few days, during which, as is known, the main army had to enter on its march to Ofen, the time necessary for the convenient execution of this operation.



General Pöltenberg hastened to execute the received order, first of all by doubling his artillery developed in the foremost line; secured it against attacks of the hostile horse by disposing a part of the cavalry of the second corps in the second line; advanced, and swiftly frustrating one after another the repeated attempts on the part of the enemy from point to point to make a stand, he soon arrived on the open ground between Harkály and the southern spur of the forest at the river-bank.

Here the resistance of the hostile left wing, turned on its left meanwhile by the uninterrupted advance of our infantry—in the forest at the river-bank and the northern half of the southern forest-spur—seemed to be paralyzed; for its columns avoided further combat, and, retreating toward Acs, hastened to gain the passages across the brook Czenczó.

A part of the cavalry, which, ready for action as the second line, followed our front of artillery, rushed rapidly forward by Harkály, in order to interrupt the junction between the left wing retreating toward Acs, and the other parts of the hostile army moved back in the direction of Igmánd and Mocsá. The main body of Pöltenberg's cavalry, however—till then disposed in echelons toward Igmánd, for the protection of the flank, always at gun-range distance to the left in the rear—was ordered to pursue.

But the distress of the hostile left wing, singly exposed for several hours to our attacks, must already have reached its turning point!

The main body of Pöltenberg's cavalry could not undertake the pursuit; for, attacked by a strong column of cavalry, which had meanwhile hastened thither on the road from Mocsá, it had now quite enough to do to oppose the impetuous attacks of its assailants.

General Pöltenberg personally commanded in the obstinate cavalry engagement, and left the conduct of the principal line developed against Acs to the chief of the artillery of our main army.

He, solicitous about the line of retreat for his batteries on the left wing to the camp, at the commencement of the cavalry contest ceased to advance, but next moment was ordered immediately to go forward; for from our left wing I received a report, that the extreme right wing of the Austrians—before which O-Szőny

had been evacuated on the morning of the day, in consequence of a very unfortunate cavalry conflict (the third corps lost in it one of its batteries)—was making a resolute resistance to the attacks of General Klapka directed to reconquering this point.

But the possession of O-Szöny by us was the result of our intention to lead the main army from Komorn to Ofen ; consequently to support General Klapka in his endeavors to regain this absolutely indispensable point from the enemy was now the most important duty of the right wing of the army, acting under my immediate command.

With the then position of our army, this support, however, could not be furnished in a direct manner ; nevertheless it could and must be done by the employment of all our forces in an indirect manner.

General Klapka, without previous concert, seemed herein to share with me one and the same view. At least this was indicated by the fact, that—as I learnt at the same time—remarking the movement directed against the right wing of our army by that column of hostile cavalry with which the main body of Pöltenberg's cavalry was just engaged, and perceiving the intention of the former to cripple our offensive against the left wing of the hostile army by repeatedly attacking our seventh corps in flank and rear—he sent immediately a part of the cavalry of the third corps to assist General Pöltenberg, while he continued energetically himself with the infantry divisions of the same corps the attacks on O-Szöny.

By means of this succor, which it was necessary should arrive in the shortest time within the battle-range of the main body of our cavalry, Pöltenberg could prospectively be in a position to repulse in the most decided manner the attacks of the column of the hostile cavalry, nay even to assume the offensive against it, and thus protect to the left and in the rear the further advance of our principal line against the left wing of the Austrians.

This advance (hitherto a mere repressive measure, rendered possible solely, nay even openly challenged, by the enigmatical disappearing of the parts of the hostile army which had been developed before Csém and Mocsá) was now destined to serve for turning off the hostile forces from O-Szöny ; for only in this manner, it appeared to me, the *indirect* support afforded to the

left wing of our army in its efforts to reconquer the place was possible with a favorable result.

I did not, however, overlook the circumstance that, on account of the uncommon superiority of his forces, it was possible for the enemy to paralyze simultaneously the advance of the right wing of our army as well as the intentions of the left against O-Szöny. Consequently, if this advance was to answer its purpose, energy must make up for what it wanted in material strength; it must force upon the enemy, by means of this energy, serious apprehensions about the continuity of his extended position.

If it made upon him the impression of an attempt to break through, then, and only then, the further task of our right wing had to be considered as fulfilled; then the enemy must feel himself obliged to concentrate his *whole* force opposite the *right* wing of our army; then he must give up the maintenance of O-Szöny.

The *intended* range, however, of my next following tactic dispositions—according to my own observation of the strength of the enemy on the morning of that day—need not really go any further than this. The thought of a *serious* attempt at breaking through, considering the great numerical inferiority of our forces, could only originate in, and at the same time be justified by, the supposition that the enigmatical disappearance of the parts of the enemy's army developed before Csém and Mocsá was the commencement of the immediate continuance of the hostile operations against Ofen.

But this supposition I already found to be inadmissible, on the ground that the continuance of the operations against Ofen, so long as our army stood before Komorn, on the right bank of the Danube, appeared to me very hazardous; and hazardous, nay desperate enterprises—in the face of the Russian intervention—were indicated to us only, not to the Austrians.

After the extraordinary display of forces which the enemy made at the beginning of his cavalry attack on the main body of our horse, this supposition must be altogether left out of the question; for,

The obstinate combat brought on by this cavalry attack was still undecided, when to the left of the column of hostile cavalry (between it and Harkály) a considerable number of guns suddenly began to cannonade the main body of our horse.

General Pöltenberg posted to the right of the battle-line of the



main body of his cavalry the two batteries belonging to it, by the fire of which we were enabled to maintain ourselves on the battlefield.

But now the enemy attacked with a no less considerable number of guns the left flank also of our principal line advancing against Acs; while almost at the same time the detachment of hussars, which had been pushed forward beyond Harkály, began to retreat, and soon afterward the inner left wing likewise of the hostile army impeded its retreat to Acs, already commenced without resistance, and renewed the combat by an attack of artillery on the front of our principal line.

I considered the collective force, to whose energetic interference the hostile left wing just now owed its disengagement, to be nothing more than the centre of the enemy; supposed his right wing was still at or near O-Szőny; and that I must consequently not give up the combat yet, in spite of the dangerous situation in which the right wing of our army was placed by the concentric attacks of the enemy, nay must partly even continue it on the offensive.

The battery on the left wing of the principal line was consequently drawn back, and placed so as to form a hook with the front of the latter, and almost ranging with the batteries of the main body of the cavalry. It had to act against the attack directed on the flank of our principal line. Its other batteries ceased at the same time to advance toward Acs, but were charged to maintain their position. Hereupon the two batteries of the main body of the cavalry were ordered to advance against the retired right wing of the artillery line of the hostile centre, in order to prepare the attack of the main body of the cavalry on this point.

The latter, after firmly repulsing the repeated attacks of the column of the hostile cavalry, had speedily reformed its ranks and been considerably reinforced by the succor from the third corps, which had meanwhile arrived. General Pöltenberg retained the command over it, and on my order now advanced to attack. At the very beginning, his left wing, being within the effective reach of the hostile guns, refused; while the right, less menaced, uninterruptedly continued its progress. Thereby the whole line fell into an unintentional change of direction to the left (toward Mocsá). Pöltenberg tried to remedy this incon-

venience, but the hostile projectiles frustrated his endeavors, and the left wing remained further behind.

Cavalry has this important advantage over infantry, that though on the battle-field it can not easily be kept to the fulfillment of its duty by coercive measures *en gros*, it is, generally speaking, more susceptible of impression from encouraging examples.

Aware of this by experience, I hastened to the left wing to harangue it, calling upon it to follow me closely—started at a quicker pace—and the advance immediately regained its original direction.

The officers of the suite then present, together with the hussars assigned to them, kept next to me.

At first my eyes were directed toward Moesa (to the left). From thence I expected to see hasten hither the right wing of the Austrian army.

I could not distinguish, however, on the horizon in this direction any hostile lines, and now fixed my gaze exclusively on our object of attack.

This was the white line, sharply defined on the extreme right wing of the hostile centre, in which I thought I perceived Austrian cavalry on white horses.

The undulating ground, over which we were speedily advancing, made it alternately disappear and emerge again. Arrived at the last elevation before it, we now beheld unexpectedly only the rear of several divisions of Austrian light horse or dragoons, at the distance of about fifty paces.

Some hussars galloped past me to charge the fugitives.

At the same moment one of my near companions remarked that our fronts had remained very far behind us. I halted, that they might come up with me.

Simultaneously I noticed on my right a dark hostile front. The sun was just above the horizon. This front, turned toward me, was between where I stood and the setting sun. Dazzled by his rays, I could with difficulty distinguish, in spite of the short distance, only the kind of troops. I took them for lancers.

To their left stood the battery of the extreme right wing of the hostile centre, directing its uncommonly brisk fire against our advancing fronts. I saw that they would be endangered in their right flank by the lancers, if they continued to advance in

the same direction. They were then still far enough back to avoid this danger by changing the direction to the right. This, however, must be executed without delay; consequently Pöltenberg had to be immediately informed of the danger which threatened him. But this was hardly practicable. To dispatch an officer to General Pöltenberg, or even myself to ride to him, seemed to me inadvisable. I thought that at this critical moment I ought carefully to avoid any step which might be taken for a signal to turn back; and as my voice could not be heard at the considerable distance—especially with the noise made by the advance and almost uninterrupted thunder of the near hostile cannons—I had no other way left of making myself understood by General Pöltenberg but motioning with my hat.

While I was endeavoring—my gaze sharply directed on our advancing fronts—to perceive from their movements whether my repeated motioning toward the point which menaced danger was understood, I suddenly received a violent blow on the bare head, and felt that I was wounded.

From this moment I stood in need of my hat as a compress in the absence of any other bandage. Besides, our fronts had meanwhile approached too near to execute now the desired change of direction, and making signs any longer seemed just as superfluous as my previous efforts had been unsuccessful. At last the vehement fire of the hostile artillery also had unfitted the divisions for manœuvering.

Alarmed for the result of the attack, I awaited the arrival of the foremost divisions, determined that there the disadvantage of the unfavorably chosen direction for attack should at least be lessened as much as possible by the resoluteness of the attack itself. Meanwhile I availed myself of the time still remaining until the arrival of the first divisions, to have a temporary bandage applied by one of the officers of my suite; and remarked with satisfaction, that the battery of the right wing of the hostile centre had taken to flight. This raised for the moment my drooping hopes of a favorable result to the attack.

But the improvised surgeon, with the best intentions, could not for a good while get the temporary bandage completed. The attack swiftly rattled past me; and when at last I was again in motion, even the hussars had come back.

Some officers, with rare devotion, assisted me to check the



flight in its origin. In fact separate groups took courage and once more made front against the enemy, but were always carried away again by the dense pressure of superior numbers.

While I had been engaged with the bandaging of my wound, I had not been able to observe the progress of the combat in its most decisive moment; and consequently the cause of the flight remained unknown to me, until at last completely exhausted, and desisting from further efforts to stop the flight, I turned my attention again to the enemy, and remarked, besides the increased cannonade on the right wing of the hostile centre and the pursuing lancers, an attack also of artillery proceeding from the direction of Mocsá.

This latter circumstance caused me to hope that the right wing of the Austrians was on its march against the right wing of *our* army, consequently that they had already relinquished the maintenance of O-Szöny.

I was determined, by means of a renewed advance of the cavalry, to be certified of this; and desired General Pöltenberg, whom I accidentally met during the *débandade*, to hasten in advance of the fleeing hussars, and speedily reorganize them beyond the reach of the hostile artillery. He succeeded in this, still *within* reach of the battery pursuing us from the direction of Mocsá.

However, morally convinced of General Klapka's determination to run all risks for the retaking of O-Szöny, I ascertained for certain that it had already been given up by the Austrians from the silence of the thundering of artillery on the left wing of our army.

And the renewed advance of the main body of our artillery, which I had intended, did not take place.

Only the nearest of our cavalry-batteries was ordered against the *hostile* battery, which, as it seemed, was advancing isolated from the direction of Mocsá.

Next moment, however, it voluntarily ceased firing, and thus concluded the day's hot conflicts.

Meantime I had received from the chief of the artillery of our main army, who had throughout been intrusted with the command of the principal line, a report that he had maintained his position; from the extreme right wing however, news arrived that our infantry had advanced in the forest at the river-bank along the Danube upward as far as the brook Czonzó.

This news in some degree consoled me for the bitter recollection of the disgraceful behavior of the Komorn battalions at the Monostor, on the morning of the day.

But this intelligence caused me at the same time immediately to dispatch orders for a retreat to the infantry divisions posted in the forest at the river-bank and in the southern spur. These, with a perseverance worthy of being particularly mentioned, had conquered a place, the maintenance of which against the left wing of the Austrians, considering the position of their centre at that moment, would prospectively have been an undertaking as disastrous as, considering our predetermination to lead the army to Ofen, it would have been without a motive.

For securing to the left the retreat of these infantry divisions, the principal line and the main body of the cavalry remained till it was quite dark in the same position as both had occupied immediately before our cavalry attack.

The enemy, however, continued quiet. It seemed as if he considered that he had fulfilled his day's task, when, by sacrificing O-Szöny, he successfully opposed in its latter period, the counter-stroke of the right wing of our army against his left, which he had challenged, apparently unintentionally, by his own manœuvres.

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## CHAPTER LXVI.

AFTER returning from the battle-field to my lodgings, I remained, by the doctor's orders, during three whole days without the least knowledge of current events, nay was even kept aloof from every matter connected with the service, and did not learn till the evening of the 5th of July, and then only accidentally, the causes by which the departure of our main army from Komorn to Ofen had meanwhile been delayed.

On that evening an officer of the head-quarters returned from Pesth to Komorn, and expressed a desire to communicate to me orally certain private news which I was impatiently expecting. The doctor gave his consent to this; and the officer, not aware

that it had been forbidden to any one to speak in my presence about the public affairs of the day, incidentally mentioned some of the late occurrences at Pesth : a serenade in honor of Lieutenant-general Dembinski—the substance of several public speeches delivered on the occasion, partly to, partly by the individual celebrated, directed against me, and such like. As a natural consequence of these communications, it was no longer possible to keep secret from me what had happened at the main army since my being wounded.

On the 2d of July, 1849, immediately after the battle—so I now learnt—General Klapka, as well as every separate commander of corps of the main army, received a government dispatch with the decree of the governor of the country, Kossuth, dated the 1st of July, 1849, wherein the appointment of Field-marshal Lieutenant Mészáros as commander-in-chief of all the troops in Hungary was announced, and the army called upon to render obedience to him. Simultaneously Kossuth's decree, addressed to me personally, arrived at my head-quarters, by virtue of which I was removed from the army, to devote myself from that time exclusively to the management of the war-ministerial business.

In the situation of the main army with regard to discipline as well as strategy this government measure, considered in itself, nevertheless, made not the least change : for Klapka was already, without it, in consequence of my sudden unfitness for service, as the oldest general in rank of the main army, for the time being, likewise its real commander-in-chief ; and as, on the one hand, he had been informed by me personally of the decision of the ministerial council to lead the main army without delay from Komorn to Ofen ; on the other hand had received no counter-order from the commander-in-chief Mészáros ; and finally, as the first army corps had reached Komorn by the 3d, or at latest the 4th of July ;—it would in any case have been General Klapka's duty to arrange for the march of the army from Komorn to Ofen at the latest by nightfall between the 4th and 5th of July.

My recall from the command of the army, and the nomination of Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros as commander-in-chief of all the Hungarian troops, appeared, however—so I was further informed—to the commanders of corps and their officers not to be sufficiently justified either by Kossuth's plenitude of power, or by



the assent of the ministerial council, but least of all by the well-known services as general of Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros ; and General Klapka was thereby determined for the present to delay the departure of the army, but at the same time summoned the commanders of corps, divisions, and bodies of troops, nay even deputies of the officers of the divers bodies, to a conference upon the government measure.

The result of this meeting was—so it was further reported to me—a written declaration, in the name of the army, to the governor of the country, Kossuth, in favor of my still continuing at the head of the army ; and the appointment by the assembly of Generals Klapka and Nagy-Sándor to present this document to Kossuth in person.

When all this came to my knowledge on the evening of the 5th of July, Generals Klapka and Nagy-Sándor were just expected back from their mission.

They soon returned with the government decree, which enjoined on me as a duty to choose between withdrawing from the war-ministry, or quitting the chief command of the main army.

The unequivocal proofs of esteem and confidence which had just been given me by the generals, staff and superior officers of the main army, decided me—on the supposition that I should soon again be fit for service—to secure to myself the reversion of the chief command of the main army, that is, without delay to send in my resignation as war-minister.

At the same time I learned from Klapka that the government in Pesth had resolved, on the proposal of Dembinski, whom the commander-in-chief Mészáros had made his *alter ego*, to concentrate the whole mobile force on the Maros and lower Theiss, and only from thence to attempt the reconquest of Hungary. Should, however, this attempt miscarry, it was to be repeated from Transylvania, after a retreat had been effected thither, with still more concentrated strength.

In consequence of this communication I directed General Klapka, the commanders of corps, and the chief of the central office of operations, to assemble at my quarters on the following day, in order to advise with them about the next operations of the main army.

It can hardly affect the formation of a correct judgment upon the result of this consultation, which will be afterward commu-

nicated, if I previously state, *how*, since the moment when the government deputies (Csányi, Aulich, and Ernest Kiss) left Komorn with my promise to lead the army with all possible speed to Ofen, I viewed my situation in general, and *how* in particular Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros' nomination as commander-in-chief in connection with my simultaneous recall from the army.

The reader is aware that on the 30th of June I had declared by letter to the governor of the country, Kossuth, that I was fighting not for the government, but for the nation, and that I was even prepared for its advantage to lay down my arms; or, in other terms, that I had refused unconditional obedience to Kossuth.

Now, while this declaration was being forwarded from Komorn to Pesth, the just-mentioned government deputies were on their way from Pesth to Komorn, to induce me to yield to the government. After having succeeded, they returned immediately to Pesth.

In the mean time, however, my written declaration of the 30th of June must have reached the governor of the country, Kossuth; and I foresaw that, supported by it, in spite of my later verbal one, which Csányi, Aulich, and Ernest Kiss were to convey to him, he would risk any thing in order to remove me from the main army. I likewise did not for a moment doubt of his success. The sole obstacle he might have to encounter in attaining this object would be the non-assent of the ministerial council. But it was not unknown to me, that among my colleagues there was only one who possessed, on the one hand, the necessary confidence in me, and on the other hand the courage to vote against my recall from the army, when Kossuth should demand it. I had consequently to be prepared for being removed from the chief command, in spite of my verbal promise to march the main army from Komorn to Ofen, and felt the necessity of giving a public account of my acts for Hungary up to that time.

But as a diversified fate prospectively awaited me when far from the army, and as, I confess, I did not expect a favorable one, nay, as I had even sufficient reason to apprehend that the public justification of what I had hitherto done and left undone would subsequently be scarcely possible for me—I availed myself of the time still left me during the liberty of my person, to put this justification on paper, that it might be ready in case of

my being recalled—an order which I was nevertheless determined to obey at any risk.

Very early on the morning of the 2d of July I began to draw up the justificatory document in the following terms :

*"From the Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief to the Council of Ministers at Buda-Pesth.\**

*"Komorn, July 2, 1849.*

"During the advance of the Hungarian army from the Theiss to the Danube, nobody in Hungary had the courage, or even the assurance, to believe in a fortunate issue of this campaign. Nay, after the battle of Isaszeg, the affairs of Hungary, independently of the Russian invasion, were still in so critical a condition, that only persons richly endowed with a happy imagination and with optimist credulity could give themselves up to the visionary illusion, that Hungary was saved, and could now freely act for itself.

"Vain was my warning voice, not to become elated with good fortune, but to think how we might ourselves be strengthened, and not to provoke the enemy by arrogance. Vain was the conviction, which I then expressed before the present governor of the country, that the army, although the historical devotion of the Hungarians to their king had suffered a sensible shock through the octroyed constitution, was nevertheless fighting mainly for the preservation of the advantages acquired in March, 1848. In vain I adduced in proof, that if King Ferdinand V. of Hungary, even immediately after a victorious battle, suddenly appeared before the ranks of the champions for Hungarian liberty, confidently demanding from them protection and a re-establishment in his former rights—the greater part of the Hungarian army at once and unconditionally doing homage to the king, of their own free impulse, and actuated by a certain sentiment of justice—the other part, the so-called republican party, at all events the smaller, doing the same after a short consideration, would make his cause their own. Vain was it for me to maintain that, although more profound politicians than myself saw Hungary's future prosperity blooming on the field of independence exclusively, nay, in total separation from the house of Hapsburg-Lorraine, this separation must not be forced, precipitate, but follow as a necessary consequence from the events themselves, and be in some measure demanded by them; that, in a word, a battle won was the best declaration of independence, and that this, *proclaimed* in the name of the nation, would only then be advisable when in the whole domain of Hungary an enemy was no longer to be found, and Austria should even then continue obstinately to refuse, as hitherto, any peaceable arrangement. It was in vain that I represented to the present governor of the country, when asked my opinion about his intended motion of the declaration of independence, that the army still contained very numerous elements which were kept together only by the oath taken to the constitution.

\* This document is communicated in its original composition, with all the faults of style, here and there even running counter to logic, of a hasty rough-draft drawn up amid disturbing influences; because it can have any value as an historical document only as it was originally written.



"In spite of all these true and well-founded representations, the 14th of April nevertheless saw the light. At the commencement I had only one answer to it, that the nation was thereby inevitably committed to a struggle for life or death, after it had, on the 14th of April, destroyed all the bridges behind itself, nay had even rendered impossible any negotiations with Austria, founded on the advantages acquired in March, 1848.

"The Sarló 19th of April, when the Hungarian arms were victorious, seemed to have given the consecration of life to the Debreczin 14th of April;—from all parts declarations of homage streamed into the columns of the *Közlöny*, as so many magnanimous resolutions to partake in the struggle for life or death. Only that army whose victories at Hatvan, Bicske, and Isaszeg seemed to have called forth the 14th of April; that army whose pre-supposed sympathy for the total separation from Austria is said to have caused the ultimate result of the debate which preceded the 14th of April; that army, by whose desire—pretended to have existed—to originate, by means of its own dictatorial authority, something similar to the 14th of April, the still-irresolute representatives were frightened, and as it were morally forced to the decision of the 14th of April—that army was silent. From it no document of homage was exhibited in the columns of the *Közlöny*. That army was silent; for it could not approve that its mission to deliver the nation, already so difficult, should be rendered still more so: it was silent, and nevertheless shed its blood at Komorn, on the ramparts of Ofen, at Raab, Csorna, in the mountain-towns, on this and the other side of the Waag, and in the Great Schütt, with a devotedness peculiar to it, for the cause of the oppressed people.

"Where, on the contrary, are the voters and authors of those numberless documents of homage, who appeared at first to abash the army—whose examples of written glowing enthusiasm for the combat for life or death were represented as in some measure a reproach to the still-silent army by the present governor of the country, in a letter addressed to me—what has become of these resolute combatants for life or death? What resistance did the enthusiastic Debreczin, the cradle of the 14th of April, make to a column of 4000 Cossacks? Did it imitate the noble example of Erlau after the battle at Kápolna, which, without assistance, expelled the victorious enemy, who had penetrated into it? or did it in consequence of a disastrous combat become a second Brescia?

"The army, with that sound judgment which is mostly acquired on the field of battle, has considered all these declarations of homage as nothing more than what they really are—the bending of a feeble reed exposed to the wind; and therefore all these documents could not banish from this true army of martyrs the gloomy feeling that the 14th of April was precipitate, nay more than precipitate—the arrogant challenge to a far stronger enemy. Therefore the army was silent, and myself with it. . . ."

Here the thunder of the artillery from the hostile attack on our intrenchments at the Monostor interrupted me; and in consequence of the state of physical suffering in which I returned from the battle-field, the justificatory document, of which the introduction has just been given, remained incomplete.

The communication of this unfinished original rough-draft, and the cause of its origin, will suffice I think to prove, that I did not give way to the illusion that Kossuth would be induced to consider my previous written declaration of the 30th of June as superseded by my subsequent promise to lead the main army without delay from Komorn to Ofen. Moreover, I most decidedly did not give this promise with the intention of diverting from myself the consequences of that written declaration, but solely and exclusively in the hope, awakened by Csányi and Aulich's animated assurances that there lay at the bottom of the concentration of the Hungarian forces near the capitals some well-considered resolution taken by the government exclusively for the welfare of the country;—that a retreat behind the Theiss and Maros was the real object, I did not learn, as has been mentioned, till the 5th of July, through Klapka.

I did not misapprehend the situation in which I had placed Kossuth by my written declaration of the 30th of June. On the contrary, I saw that, after this declaration, there remained for him, as Governor of the country, only one of two things—either to resign, or to remove me. There was no reason to suppose that he would choose the former: I expected the latter.

However, after Csányi and Aulich had so warmly espoused the side of Kossuth, I could as little expect the nomination of Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros for commander-in-chief, as, after the unfortunate days of Pered and Raab, I could have anticipated the determined interference of the main army in favor of my continuing at its head.

This behavior of the main army might, after all, have surprised Kossuth not less than it did myself; a proof of which is, the extremely false position in which he put himself in his first fright about it, when a few days after my categorical recall from the army, he left it to my own judgment to decide whether I would continue or not in the chief command—of course only over the main army.

In passing, I must here mention a circumstance, the investigation of which seems to me calculated to shed a ray of light on the darkness of the history of those days.

Kossuth *officially* justified my recall from the army by the necessity of putting an end to the neglected state into which the war-ministry had fallen during my sojourn with the army; *non-*

*officially*, by my having broken my word, given to the government deputies, to march the army without delay from Komorn to Ofen.

The official motive deserves no attention whatever for the very reason that Kossuth himself deemed moreover a non-official one necessary.

The latter, however, was alike superfluous and incorrect.

Superfluous, because my written declaration of the 30th of June fully sufficed to justify in a government point of view my recall from the army : incorrect, because it was an anachronism, and so of itself invalid ; for my recall from the army, and the nomination of Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros as commander-in-chief, dated from the 1st of July, 1849, and on that day—as is evident from the conclusion of Chapter LXIV.—Kossuth might indeed arbitrarily assume that I would break my promise to march the army as speedily as possible to Ofen, but could by no means assert that I had already broken it, unless this assertion should be based on facts which on the 1st of July lay still concealed in the lap of the future.

Now, however, Kossuth—as I apprehend the matter—justified my recall from the army by my presumed breach of promise, and not by my refractory declaration, because the latter was based on the injury done to the interests of the nation.

In the same letter of the 30th of June, in which I had made this refractory declaration, I mentioned likewise the well-known conflagration-decree, and maintained that the nation now no longer knew against whom it had to defend itself, whether against the Russians, the Austrians, or against the Hungarians themselves.

Thus Kossuth undeniably feared the public discussion of the various reasons for my refractory declaration, and thought it consequently more advisable to base my recall from the army on a fictitious motive, instead of on the only real one.

But while Kossuth was thus endeavoring, in an official and non-official way, to prevent the logical connection between his conflagration-decree and my refusal blindly to obey him from being generally known, it was himself who conjured up—especially in the ranks of the main army—the suspicion against him, that he had removed me from the chief command merely out of rivalry, if not even out of personal hatred. Besides, Kossuth over-



looked the fact, that the appointment of Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros as commander-in-chief was equivalent to an actual confirmation of this suspicion; and that by this choice each separate corps of the main army must feel injured in the person of its immediate commander. And I believe I shall hardly err if I consider a great part of that firmness with which the army declared itself against my being recalled, to have been the natural consequence of the general consternation at the unlucky choice of my successor. This consternation, however, Kossuth might certainly have foreseen, as it was by no means unknown to him that only *one* was in still worse repute with the army as a general than Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros, and that this one was no other than his (Mészáros') *alter ego*, Lieut.-general Dembinski.

Let us synoptically recapitulate, from the details hitherto communicated, the most essential events at Komorn, together with their causes and objects, in order to facilitate still more the comprehension of those which follow.

From Kossuth's decree, to reduce to ashes all places, as soon as we should be forced to evacuate them before the enemy, and from his refusal to join the main army at Komorn, I had become convinced that *he was incapable of perceiving what the nation was at that moment in want of; incapable, even if he had perceived it, of striving for it at the sacrifice of his personal interests.*

The influence of this conviction upon my acts is well known. I renounced all connection with Kossuth; declared this undisguisedly *to himself*; and thus took a step which must necessarily lead to an open rupture between him and me, consequently prospectively to my defeat, as I took this step *for myself alone*, without the privity of any part of the main army.

I had no *made* party behind me. Kossuth alone could *make* a party for me, as matters stood. And he did so—not perhaps by my removal from the chief command of the army, but by transferring it to the duumvirate Mészáros-Dembinski; a measure which must be severely blamed even by his warmest partisans in the ranks of the main army.

The guarantee which Csányi and Aulich—men whom I highly esteemed—gave for Kossuth, shook my conviction of his moral weakness.

I saw that the decisive step which I had taken against him in

consequence of this conviction—pernicious to me alone, if Kossuth showed himself worthy of the guarantee of these honorable men—had been precipitate ; but I could not undo it.

I promised to march the army to Ofen, and was determined to do so, solely on the ground that Csányi and Aulich had shaken my conviction of Kossuth's moral weakness.

Kossuth alone could confirm *again* and *forever* this conviction. He did so—not perhaps by my removal from the chief command over the army, but by transferring it to the duumvirate Mészáros-Dembinski ; a measure from which, in my opinion, there was not the least probability of the nation deriving advantage : not the prospect of thereby again nailing victory to the tri-color banner—for both men had already succeeded, by their previous services in the field, in placing it beyond all doubt, that they were as unfortunate generals as they were personally brave soldiers : not the probability of thereby restoring the disturbed unity in the chief command—for the main army, moreover, at that moment commanded by a partisan of the government, General Klapka, was just then in open opposition to the execution of this measure.

Nay, I was not even able to justify this measure by the supposition that Kossuth firmly believed that Hungary was saved, so soon as *he himself* should exert an immediate influence on the supreme direction of the war-operations—and that he was determined to secure for himself, at any price, the possibility of exercising such an influence ; for if this was really his belief (no matter whether illusion or not illusion), he ought not to have delayed a moment, but have hastened in person to Komorn, in order to secure to himself, before every thing else, the obedience of the main army.

Mészáros and Dembinski consequently were indebted for the honor of being played as last trump, with the motto “for the salvation of the country,” neither to Kossuth's belief in the latter—for Kossuth had positively denied this belief beforehand by his well-known conflagration-decree ; nor to Kossuth's anxious care for the preservation of the honor of the national arms—for it was not unknown to Kossuth that this had hitherto been the most exposed by Mészáros and Dembinski ; nor to Kossuth's zealous striving for unity in the army—unity implies confidence, but the main army had already with sufficient clearness given Kossuth to understand, that there existed in its ranks not a vestige of

confidence in Mészáros and Dembinski; nor in general to any intention whatever of Kossuth's that I could perceive, which did not appear favorable directly to his personal interest—to that of the nation, on the contrary, only on extravagant suppositions.

To this comfortless conclusion I was moreover unfortunately brought by my consideration of the real worth of that plan of operations which—communicated to me by Klapka, as is known—projected by Dembinski, and accepted by Kossuth and the ministerial council, laid down as the next step the concentration of all the Hungarian forces at the Maros and lower Theiss, and at the same time leaving behind in Komorn about 20,000 men, in order then, as it continued, to destroy with united power the Russians and Austrians *tour à tour*; or if this should not succeed, to gain, in the further retreat to Transylvania, the last point of the final reconquest in Hungary.

This plan of operations, in my opinion, contained glaring contradictions.

Dembinski intended the concentration of our forces opposite *one* of the concentric attacks of the enemy; since the sum total of our force was insufficient effectively to encounter *all* of them simultaneously.

Concentric attacks are hardly ever so managed as that corps of equal strength advance on the offensive on all the lines of operations. The reason of this lies first of all in the essentially different importance of the converging lines of offensive operations; which difference, again, is partly permanent, depending on unchangeable strategic local circumstances, partly merely transient, contingent on the plan of operations of the assailant.

The first duty of a general who would successfully oppose a numerically superior concentric offensive is, to discover the principal attack, and next to oppose it with all his might; while the defensive, opposed to the secondary attacks, is reduced even, in case of necessity, to mere observing. But if *two* principal attacks are to be opposed, each of which singly, combined with the secondary attacks, suffices to peril the victorious issue of the defensive, and the enemy threatens moreover to surround completely; then the only choice left is between "*va-banque*" and "suddenly giving up the defense of the country, to gain a safe asylum beyond it."



If he chooses "*va-banque*," then one of the two principal attacks—and this commonly that which is furthest removed from the centre-point of his own force—must meanwhile be treated as a secondary attack.

If he prefers "gaining an asylum," then both principal attacks are to be avoided betimes, the forces to be concentrated against a secondary attack, which will be repelled, and thereby the line of retreat to a neutral territory secured.

In the first case all may be won, but all may also be lost—except military honor: this is forever secured; and, observe, the honor of those arms, on whose sharpness indeed the cause of a nation exclusively depends, is the honor of the nation itself.

In the other case there is nothing more to lose; because there every thing else, military honor included—except an unendangered retreat from the theatre of war—had already been exposed.

To unite both cases is strategically as well as morally impossible.

Hungary was concentrically attacked. Secondary attacks were undertaken, in the northeast (Mármaros), east (Transylvania), south (Banat and Bácska), southwest (the Schümeg and Zalad comitate), and in the north (Arva). Principal attacks, in the west (on the upper Danube), in the north (on the upper Theiss).

Each of the two principal attacks separately considered—combined with the secondary attacks just enumerated—certainly sufficed to make very doubtful the final success of the defense of the country; the danger of being inclosed on all sides also was not to be mistaken; and only in the southeast a neutral territory offered a safe asylum, but on the way thither the directions of the southern and eastern secondary attacks crossed each other—the hostile fortress of Temesvár stood!

Thus, a few days after the battle of Pered, was the situation of Hungary viewed by me.

I consequently now saw before us only the alternative of "*va-banque*" or "retreat into Turkey;" chose the first, and brought forward in the ministerial council of the 26th of June my proposal to seek immediately a final decision on the right bank of the Danube, in a desperate attack on the main army of the Austrians alone; and meanwhile merely to observe the principal attack of the Russians, and to stay it in its further advance at most—if possible—by opening negotiations.

Nevertheless Kossuth might consider the retreat into Turkey far more suitable to circumstances.

And the protection of this retreat was the peculiar and sole value of Dembinski's plan of operations.

In it I found the theory above shortly developed—of the sudden giving up (in the operations) of the defense of the country, to gain a safe asylum beyond it—sentence after sentence practically applied; for the concentration of the whole Hungarian force (deducting about 20,000 men as garrison for Komorn) at Szegedin, on the point of contact of the lines of the Maros and lower Theiss, while the Russian main army was stationed at Miskolcz, the Austrian at Komorn, evidently meant—to avoid *betimes* both principal attacks: and that Dembinski would succeed by this operation in repelling the southern secondary attack—that mainly menacing Szegedin, consequently his line of retreat into Turkey—(the Austrian southern army under Ban Baron Jellachich), and thereby secure to himself and his patrons a passage to a neutral territory, of this I did not for a moment doubt.

But I really must doubt the sincerity of the assertion, that this concentration on the Maros and lower Theiss was *only the strategic arrangement for the destruction of both hostile main armies*; nay even that the further retreat to Transylvania, in case of the worst, was *nothing else than the beginning of the reconquest of Hungary*.

For if Dembinski was in earnest about the ruin of the hostile main armies, he could not possibly intend to begin the work of destruction simultaneously against both; he must at all events be content to destroy them separately, one after the other. But then he could not overlook, that with each retrograde step toward Szegedin he made the accomplishment of this task progressively more difficult; as well moreover as that he could not expect any position of the hostile main armies to be more favorable than that was which they occupied when his plan of operations was first projected—but certainly increasingly more unfavorable.

For at that time the Russian army was posted near Miskolcz, the Austrian on the Czonczó line, consequently separated by a distance of more than thirty miles and the Danube.

General Vysocki retreating before the Russian main army with his troops could reach Komorn by means of forced marches—leaving a small column before the Russian vanguard to observe

it—ere the main body of the Russians crossed the Danube. Simultaneously it was possible also for the Kmety division to rejoin the main army at Komorn, at worst by Ofen ; and Lieut.-general Dembinski would gain consequently at Komorn, the local circumstances being very favorable, at all events several days' time for attacking the Austrian army with force and probable success, even before he could be directly assailed by the Russians.

The possibility of assuming, under equally favorable circumstances, the offensive against the main army of the Austrians or Russians, according to Dembinski's plan of operations, could not be assumed, either at a later period or in another quarter of the country—especially at Szegedin or on the way thither ; because,

1. The strategic position of both hostile main armies to each other—as has already been pointed out—with each new day and each retrograde step of Dembinski's must become progressively more unfavorable for his offensive intentions.

2. It was not possible for Dembinski to concentrate in time with an offensive intention at Szegedin, or on the way thither, a greater number of troops fit for action than at Komorn.

3. Dembinski immediately after leaving Komorn would nowhere find those favorable local circumstances, partly natural, partly prepared, which favored him at Komorn.

Remark upon the first reason : the two hostile main armies were stationed, the Austrians on the Czoneczó line, the Russians near Miskolcz, at an almost equal distance from Szegedin, the point chosen by Dembinski—in the pretended offensive intention—for the concentration of the Hungarian forces. Our main army, however, was encamped at and north of Komorn, consequently further from Szegedin than the two hostile armies.

The larger half of our main army, ordered to the last-mentioned point, might, it is true, by forced marches, not only overcome the disadvantage of the greater distance, but even gain on the hostile main armies an advance of two or three days on the march to Szegedin. This, however, did not in the least prevent the marching likewise of the latter from Miskolcz and the Czoneczó line simultaneously toward Szegedin, and coming during the two-thirds of this operation so near each other, that Dembinski could execute no offensive stroke whatever against either of the two hostile armies without being himself immediately



attacked by the other in much shorter time than this seemed possible at Komorn.

On the second reason: the Hungarian forces were distributed in the country, to the best of my knowledge, in the beginning of July, 1849, in the following manner:

*a.* The main army (together with the garrison of Komorn, but without the Kmety division), about 45,000 men, at and north of Komorn. (The Kmety division, separated from it, about 5000 men, in the district of Stuhlweissenburg).

*b.* The Vysocki corps, from 9000 to 10,000 men, between Pesth and Miskolcz.

*c.* The Kazinczy division, from 6000 to 7000 men, in the Mármaros.

*d.* The corps of the reserve, proposed to reach 10,000 men, partly still in its training stations, partly about concentrating itself on the line between Pesth and Szolnok, partly already employed as reinforcements of the following corps d'armée:

*e.* The army of Field-marshal Lieut. Vetter in the Banat and the Bácska.

*f.* The army of Field-marshal Lieut. Bem in Transylvania.

*g.* The troops in garrison at Peterwardein, Arad, Munkács, Déva.

The latter, as well as those 20,000 men whom Dembinski ordered to be left from the main army in Komorn, as a matter of course can not be included in the concentration at Szegedin; so likewise the Kazinczy division, because Dembinski would expose himself to the danger of being attacked by both hostile main armies in Szegedin itself, in case he should mean to delay the intended offensive until the arrival thither of the Kazinczy division. Finally, the armies under Bem and Vetter also were just as little at his disposal for the offensive concentration round Szegedin as the troops of occupation and the Kazinczy division, because Dembinski in his plan of operations had already assigned to each of them its quite distinct duty.

For the army of Bem had to defend Transylvania; while that of Vetter had to guard the lower Danube from the mouth of the Theiss as far as Orsova, to destroy Ban Jellachich, to relieve Peterwardein, to conquer the plateau of Titel, and to take Temesvár, for which purpose it was in fact, as was reasonable, to be strengthened by a part of the main army (the Kmety division),

and moreover, unless I mistake, also by some sections, already equipped for service, of the corps of reserve. Consequently Dembinski could not think either of employing the army under Bem in an offensive from the Maros or lower Theiss against the Russian or the Austrian main body; because Transylvania, as the last point for the reconquest of Hungary, was to be maintained at any cost, in case the destruction of both hostile main armies from the lower Theiss and Maros should not prove successful: nor could he calculate on the co-operation of that under Vetter until the taking of Temesvár and Titel was effected; because the capture of both was indispensable, according to his plan of operations, to secure the basis of this offensive. But if Dembinski assumed that Vetter would not need *more* time for the reconquest of the plateau of Titel and the fortress of Temesvár, than he did for the concentration at Szegedin of his remaining disposable forces, and the two hostile main armies for simultaneously and directly menacing this point of concentration, he must have been far more sanguine than even Kossuth, which seemed to me, by the way, hardly possible.

Consequently there remained to Dembinski—having destined the Kmety division for a reinforcement of the army under Vetter, and 20,000 men from the main army, according to his own orders, to be left as garrison in Komorn—for the offensive concentration at Szegedin only—

	About
Of the main army .....	25,000 men.
The Wysocki corps .....	10,000 "
The corps of reserve .....	10,000 "
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total .....	45,000 "

while he could assemble at Komorn, as I have already incidentally shown—

	About
Of the main army (together with the Kmety division, but after deducting the original garrison of Komorn) .....	42,000 men.
The Wysocki corps .....	10,000 "
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total .....	52,000 "

therefore about 7000 more than at Szegedin.

In this comparison I have intentionally included the corps of

reserve with its full number for the concentration at Szegedin, because I am not quite certain whether any of its divisions were really already employed to strengthen the army under Vetter. I have also purposely omitted to take into account, in the concentration at Komorn, the possibility of an at least partial junction of the corps of reserve; because, after all, I am not bound, in justification of my opinions, to stretch probability to its extreme limits.

I must nevertheless remark, that the reserve corps of 10,000 men, reckoned among the forces for Szegedin, would indeed *numerically* correspond to an equal number of troops of the main army appropriated to Komorn, but could by no means be considered equivalent to them in respect to their *usefulness and the dependence to be placed on them in the battle-field*; because the corps of reserve—the *cadres* excepted—consisted of quite raw recruits, and moreover was still in process of equipment. If this be taken into consideration, the assertion can hardly appear unfounded, that the force of 52,000 men for the concentration at Komorn—in comparison with the total force of 45,000 men estimated for that at Szegedin—even under otherwise equal strategic and tactic conjunctures, would lead us to expect with certainty services in the field very far exceeding its numerical majority of 7000 men.

But if Dembinski intended to increase his offensive army about to be concentrated at Szegedin by summoning the militia, and believed that in this way he should make up not only for its numerical but also for its moral inferiority, presenting a striking contrast to the forces which could be concentrated at Komorn—he resembled the farmer who, to obtain a more abundant harvest, should exchange his fruitful fields for a much larger extent of sterile ground, and would undoubtedly afterward be amazed at the absurdity of his speculation.

On the third reason: the simple remark will perhaps be sufficient, that Komorn, considering the then position of the theatre of war, was with regard to the offensive—for of this alone can we here speak, after Dembinski had so decidedly announced the offensive tendency of his plan of operations—strategically as well as tactically the most important point in the country; that Komorn, with its fortified camp, secured to Dembinski the possibility of recommencing anew, even should it repeatedly miscarry,



the offensive, so long as his war materials and his moral strength sufficed; that at Komorn a victory over our army could never react further than to the actual point whence the offensive had been commenced; while the untenableness of Szegedin and of the locality around it presented no possibility whatever, considering the offensive intended to be undertaken from thence, of meeting successfully the destructive consequences to our army of a hostile victory.

These are the most essential of the considerations which led me to the conclusion, that Dembinski had been occupied least of all with strategic-offensive ideas when he projected his plan of operations, and that he himself was as far as possible from believing in the sincerity of his protestation that the retreat to Szegedin, proposed by him, was founded on an offensive intention against one of the two hostile main armies.

Finally, the idea of continuing the retreat, if things came to the worst, as far as Transylvania, and thence to begin the reconquest of Hungary, scarcely deserved, I should think, a serious consideration. After all, *this* idea, as well as that of destroying both the hostile main armies in succession from Szegedin, seemed to have been placed so strikingly in the foreground merely to mask—as already intimated—its only practical tendency, namely, *to secure the line of retreat to a neutral territory*. Thus I could assign to the plan of operations in question no higher value than what was proper to that practical tendency.

It is true, in superficially considering our strategic situation, there might be joined to the idea of concentrating our collective forces on the Maros and lower Theiss the assumption that thereby a tenable defensive position would be gained, and with it the possibility of saving Hungary by prolonging the contest. But this assumed, in my opinion, at least that the main force of the Austrians remained near Komorn, in spite of the departure, which could not be concealed, of the greater part of our main army; further, that the fortress of Temesvár and the plateau of Titel came into our possession before the arrival of those parts of our main army at Szegedin which were designed for the concentration; finally, that the longed-for intervention from abroad in favor of Hungary be in train. And the very precariousness of these suppositions—indispensable nevertheless to this assumption—was another confirmation of my perception that the practical

value of Dembinski's plan of operations consisted solely in securing the departure of several individuals, *from the country already given up as lost*, to a safe asylum.

Consequently Kossuth—in spite of his repeated asseverations, how willingly he would die for his country—that this was not even a merit on his part, as he could not live either abroad or in Hungary, if it should fall into slavery—in spite of these and similar asseverations, by accepting Dembinski's plan of operations, as well as by his conflagration-decree and his fear of transferring himself to Komorn—had now suddenly betrayed his double intention, in the first place to save his own life, and next, from a secure distance, continually to incite thousands after thousands of his fellow-citizens to death and destruction for a principle, for which he himself, however, felt not the least vocation to die. I, on the contrary, was convinced, and am still, that *not to flinch* from dying for a cause, for which we have incited or led thousands of our fellow-citizens to die, is the highest honor we can do ourselves here below ; I was further convinced, and am still, that, considering the situation of Hungary at that time, it was a benefit which the heads of the revolution ought to have conferred on their country, a proof of regard which they owed to the honor of their nation, by the exposure of their own lives to bring the contest *speedily* to an end which, although unfortunate, could not have been *inglorious*.

Penetrated with this conviction, I had recommended the government to transfer the scene of the final decision to the right bank of the Danube ; had blamed the repeated summoning of the militia, nay even, as far as my personal influence extended, had actually prevented it ; and finally—when I was constrained to see that Kossuth was morally incapable of participating in my conviction and acting in conformity with it—had undisguisedly declared to him, that my purpose was to remain at Komorn, even with the main army alone.

Thereupon, as is known, I was removed from the chief command.

The surprisingly energetic espousal of my side by the main army, however, procured for me again the necessary power of acting according to that declaration ; and I was already firmly resolved to do so, when General Klapka, the commanders of corps of the main army, and the chief of the central office of

operations, assembled at my quarters for the appointed council of war.

I had nevertheless not to over-estimate the significance of this espousal of my side by the main army; had by no means to mistake the considerable share, which possibly, nay most probably, the general exasperation at the choice of the new commander-in-chief, and perhaps also the more lively friendly feeling awakened toward me in consequence of my having been wounded, might have had in occasioning this espousal of my side; had, finally, not to overlook the still-existing dangerous rocks on which my project might founder.

These rocks were, first of all, the evident sympathy of the two oldest generals of the main army (Klapka and Nagy-Sándor) for the measures of the government, especially for those just mentioned; and the not-insignificant influence which both these men in their high position (especially General Klapka as my substitute in the command) could exert on the disposition of the army.

The circumstance most unfavorable to my project, however, was, that the consequences of my wound prevented me from personally fulfilling the duties of commander; for thus I was completely deprived of the uncommon advantage of prevailing upon the main army as a body, by the double power of an energetic personal guidance and my own example, to separate its further destiny from that of Kossuth—as I was convinced, an absolutely honorable course—not from that of the nation.

Had I been at this time fit for service, or should I soon again have been, I would certainly not have held a military council, but, knowing the power of deeds, would have acted. I would now have led the united army according to my original project—little heeding the sympathies of Generals Klapka and Nagy-Sándor—straightway to attack the position of the Austrians; and simply by doing so should most certainly have paralyzed any influence exerted by those generals on the disposition of the army hostile to my project; for then, in order to agitate for the retreat, consequently against the attack, they must necessarily occupy an ambiguous position as soldiers, and would soon find occasion bitterly to repent that they had not remained silent.

But as I was now obliged to leave the actual conduct of the army to General Klapka, and was at the same time convinced that he would the more certainly avail himself of the authority of the



superior command against my will, as he might perceive in the decreed concentration at Szegedin a homage paid to his own idea of protracting the combat, in the confident expectation of a saving counter-intervention of the west of Europe—a corresponding resolution of the military council appeared to me to be the only means of gaining General Klapka to the execution of my project ; and I might moreover be contented, that General Klapka had not beforehand positively denied the *competency* of the military council, called together by me, to come to any conclusion contrary to the express superior command.

Next, all depended on succeeding in obtaining such a resolution of the military council.

This, however, appeared to me to be no easy matter ; for I certainly was sensible that it would be quite impossible to mask the real basis of my intention to seek with the main army the final decision at Komorn—namely, my utter despair of the possibility of a material salvation of the originally just cause of Hungary—so soon as I disclosed this intention itself, in the form of a proposition for debate, to the military council. And since I was convinced in respect of only two members of this assembly, that they had already felt like myself not merely the impossibility of a material salvation of the cause of the nation, but also the inward command to strive for its moral salvation, or—which is just the same—for the preservation of its military honor at all costs, I could not but see that the faintest ray of hope kindled in the minds of the other members of the military council—perhaps by Klapka's inevitable pointing at the great probability of a speedy saving counter-intervention—might shake my proposal to its base, and cause it to be rejected?

In order to prevent this, I thought it advisable to *conceal* the real tendency of my proposal—immediately to begin the offensive against the Austrians.

Accordingly, hoping by this manœuvre to weaken Klapka's expected objections beforehand, I supported my proposal by starting from Klapka's opinion, founded on the illusory belief of a saving counter-intervention, that the combat should be protracted as much as possible.

The principal materials for supporting this view I drew direct from Dembinski's plan of operations just spoken of.

I began by exposing those faults of it which chiefly rendered a

prolonged energetic defensive doubtful, and called the attention of the council especially to Dembinski's serious strategic mistake of having chosen the Banat as the basis of his future operations ; a part of the country, in which—considering that for the most part the disposition of its inhabitants was hostile to us—but small resources for an energetic continuance of the combat could be found ; of which the lines of defense (Maros and lower Theiss) facing the two principal hostile attacks are broken in a salient acute angle (at Szegedin), neither tactically strengthened by a tenable place, nor even strategically easy to be defended, and to the left without support so long as the plateau of Titel was in the hands of the enemy ; finally, of which the most important point (the fortress of Temesvár) was likewise still occupied by the enemy.

I further gave it as my opinion, that, considering the just-represented strategic state in the Banat, it was useless to think of a lengthened successful resistance ; that for making a change in this, however, scarcely sufficient time would be gained, if the main army joined in the general retreat to Szegedin, and, as might be expected, should be immediately followed by both hostile main armies ; that consequently these must be stopped at any cost in their further advance to the south, if indeed the necessary time was to be secured for effecting a favorable change in our precarious strategic situation in the south, and thus the desired prolongation of the combat be rendered possible ; finally, that the main army by means of its strategic position was able of itself, partly in a direct, partly in an indirect manner, to stop both hostile main armies in their further advance to the south of the country, it was to be hoped, long enough for Temesvár and the plateau of Titel to be conquered, the war-supplies distributed in the country to be laid up behind the Maros and lower Theiss, the defense of the rivers in their whole extent to be regulated and strengthened by temporary fortifications, consequently until the most indispensable conditions for a longer resistance were fulfilled.

Hereupon I proposed that the main army should remain at Komorn, and immediately assume the offensive against the Austrians ; since by doing so, the main body of the Austrians would be directly, and that of the Russians indirectly, kept far from the Maros and lower Theiss.

Lastly, I endeavored, by dwelling upon several advantages,

sometimes even improbable ones, of a successful progress of this offensive, to render my proposal plausible, in its consequences doubtless a perilous one, even to those members of the council who were perhaps still looking hopefully to the future. I might, however, have gone rather too far therein, and thus have awakened Klapka's suspicion of the sincerity of the motives by which I had supported my proposal.

However this may be, the fact is that General Klapka opposed me, and moved that the principal part of the main army, which had been designated for the concentration at Szegedin, should leave Komorn forthwith for the left bank of the Danube; because only by concentrating as speedily as possible all our forces—said Klapka—could the country still be saved; but that the result of my proposal would be the separation of the main army from the government, consequently likewise from the remaining national armies united with it.

The probability of Klapka's final assertion was too palpable not to make me fear the result of the voting on my proposal, especially as I was uncertain what might be the extent of the hopes entertained by the majority of the council.

I consequently again rose, to prove that by my proposal the junction of the main army with the government and with the other Hungarian armies was by no means rendered impossible, because after having broken through the line of the Austrians on the right bank of the Danube, no hostile obstacle whatever could any longer prevent this junction. The question on which the council had to decide was not "junction or not junction?" but rather, "whether the desired junction should be attained by flight or by fight?"

The former was no doubt the easier. Whether it was also the more honorable, on *this* the council might decide.

This turn saved my proposal to assume without delay the offensive against the Austrians on the right bank of the Danube. It was unanimously accepted by the military council; with the stipulation, however, carried by the majority, that after an attempt to break through, whether successful or unsuccessful, the junction of the greater part of the main army, which had originally been ordered for the retreat to Szegedin, with the government and the other national forces should be executed as the next object of operations.



It is true that this stipulation rendered impracticable my intention of repeating in Komorn once and again the attack on the position of the Austrians, should it, as was possible, prove unsuccessful; nevertheless I must be contented to have obtained at least thus much, that the favorable opportunity would not pass by altogether unimproved, which was offered to our main army for an energetic counter-stroke against the Austrians near Komorn, and a return of which, according to the then strategic conjunctures, was very doubtful.

General Klapka, who, with the amendment of the majority, likewise voted for my proposal, secured to himself thereby the chief management of the attack on the main army of the Austrians, which was fixed for the 9th of July by the same military council.

So much the more did it surprise me, when, in the course of the 7th of July (the military council had been held on the day previous), the first army corps (Nagy-Sándor) suddenly started from Komorn for Bátorkeszi, followed immediately by the third and seventh army corps, to execute, in spite of the decision of the military council of the preceding evening, the retreat to Szegedin on the left bank of the Danube.

I could explain this to myself only by assuming, either that General Klapka and the commanders of corps in the council on the previous day had merely pretended to vote for my proposal—perhaps out of consideration toward me, to save me a mortification by which my physical suffering might be increased—but had secretly adopted General Klapka's proposal; or by attributing the departure of the first army corps from Komorn to an intrigue of Generals Klapka and Nagy-Sándor against my person.

In the former case I was in future superfluous at the head of the army; in the latter the intrigue of Generals Klapka and Nagy-Sándor must be thwarted.

These considerations determined me now to renounce voluntarily and promptly the command over the army.

The consequence was, that, still in the evening of the 7th of July, a deputation, consisting of officers from all the divisions of the army present in Komorn, waited upon me to request me, in the name of the main army, to resume the command.

I thought it was my duty, under the circumstances just described, to explain to these officers; above all, my position in reference to the government.

I disclosed to them the real mysteries of the discord between myself and Kossuth. I called their attention especially to the fact, that I stood at that moment in open opposition to him, because I saw in the general retreat to the south, ordered by him and his commanders-in-chief of the army, nothing but the commencement of a disgraceful flight from the country ; while I was of opinion, that the main army, in order to fulfill honorably its duty to the country, for the rights of which it had become surety, had resolutely to attack the enemy which was just then posted opposite it, and not avoid him, in order that it might in good time be able to participate in this flight. I further gave the officers to understand, that their requesting me again to take the command over the main army was equivalent to approving of my open opposition to the government ; that though they (the deputies of the army) were acting, it is true, hardly against their moral, yet probably they were against their material interests, as I had already bound up my life with the cause, and that whoever in future intrusted himself to my guidance must prepare himself to do the like ; finally, that on account of the debility of my physical condition, the same personal services as I was formerly able to perform were no longer to be expected from me. But if the main army—thus I concluded my declaration—in spite of all this desired to have *me* for its commander ; would likewise fulfill the stipulation, which I made to it in this case—namely, leave Komorn only after a courageous attempt to defeat the main force of the Austrians ; and if I should be again fit for service at that time ;—then I would deem it to be my honorable duty to resume anew the command over the army.

The deputies were satisfied with this declaration. The departure of the first army corps to Bátorkeszi proved accordingly to have been the consequence of an intrigue of Generals Klapka and Nagy-Sándor. The latter had immediately to lead his corps back again to Komorn ; while the former declared himself nevertheless ready to execute the resolutions of the military council of the preceding evening.

On the 9th, however, the attack on the position of the Austrians of the right bank of the Danube, fixed, as is known, for this day, was not executed—and was postponed till the 11th. As a reason for this delay, I was informed, that even *late* in the morning of the 9th of July—consequently several hours after the

time appointed for the commencement of this advance—the troops were not yet prepared to march; though the extraordinary movement in our camp had already been remarked and signalled on the part of the enemy. That the 10th of July had passed over unimproved, might perhaps be explained by the probable intention of General Klapka first to abate the watchfulness of the enemy, increased in consequence of what he had observed on the 9th.

At last, on the 11th of July, the general attack of the Hungarian main army, commanded by General Klapka, was directed against the position of the Austrians circularly surrounding our fortified camp from the mouth of the Czoncezó as far as Almás.

To gain the Czoncezó from its mouth to Igmánd was the day's task.

It remained unaccomplished; and two days after (13th of July) the first, third, and seventh army corps (the expeditionary column of the latter included), with the expeditionary column under Armin Görgei as vanguard, departed from Komorn to the left bank of the Danube, in order to execute, now under my personal command, as the next object of our operations—according to the resolution of the military council of the 6th—the junction with the forces which were concentrating in the south of the country;—while the second and eighth army corps remained in occupation of Komorn and the fortified camp, under the chief command of General Klapka.

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## CHAPTER LXVII.

THE forces with which I left Komorn on the 13th of July, for the purpose of effecting a junction, on the left bank of the Danube, with those concentrating in the south under Field-marshal Lieut. Mészáros, consisted of the first army corps (Nagy-Sándor), the third (Count Leiningen), the seventh (Pöltenberg), and the column under Armin Görgei, in all, as well as I can remember, about 27,000 men.

This junction we were to endeavor to effect first of all by means of forced marches by Waizen and Gödöllő.



For this purpose the column under Armin Görgei (as vanguard) had started in the evening of the 12th of July from Komorn to Bátorkeszi. It was followed, in the night between the 12th and 13th by the first corps, at daybreak of the 13th by the third and seventh corps.

This order of march was observed unchanged as far as Waizen.

The train set out from Komorn in a single line, by Bátorkeszi and Kövesd on the Gran, as far as Szobb on the Eipel. Thence, however, only Armin Görgei's column and the first corps (because they constantly marched during the night) took the shortest route to Waizen by Zebegény and Nagy-Maros; while the third and seventh army corps turned the Maros defile on a mountain-road from Szobb by Maria-Nostra.

This precautionary measure seemed necessary, because the Austrians—whose patrols, in the course of the previous day, had unceasingly observed, from the right bank of the Danube, our march between Kövesd and Hellenba—during the night might dispatch some guns to Visegrád, and thus on the following day very sensibly harass our march through the Nagy-Maros defile open toward the stream.

The predetermined halting stations were: for the 13th, Bátorkeszi; for the 14th, Hellenba, Damásd, and Szobb; for the 15th, Waizen.

Early on the morning of the 15th of July, Armin Görgei's column reached the height of Waizen, and found there the outposts of the Russian cavalry regiment of Musulmen and Caucasian mountaineers, which occupied the town, but which, after a short outpost skirmish, retreated in the direction of Aszód.

The town of Waizen is situated close to the left bank of the Danube. Its extent alongside the stream, whose course is here from north to south, may be about a quarter of a mile, and is in all parts very narrow. The railroad from Pesth to Presburg is here laid mostly on a causeway and parallel with the bank of the stream, but outside the town, which it separates from the hilly ground bounding it on the east (the last western spurs of the Cserhát), and permits the communication between this ground and the town only at some points. Waizen consequently appears to be compressed as it were between the Danube and the causeway of the railroad. Through the middle of the town lengthways the main road from Upper Hungary to Pesth leads, which

previously joins the Veröcze high road, on which we were advancing, and then, at about gun-range before reaching Waizen, crosses by means of a wooden pile-bridge a deep ditch, which is impracticable for cavalry and wagons on account of the steepness of its banks.

Armin Görgei's column, after it reached the main road, had forced back, as mentioned, the hostile outposts, and thereby caused the Russian cavalry regiment to evacuate Waizen, marched with its main body through the town, while its vanguard was pursuing the enemy, and took up a position further to the south, near Hétkápolna. The first corps, which had followed it, encamped in its rear.

From the gently undulating ground at the river-bank, becoming wider down stream, there rises an eminence, at first bare (seen from Waizen, it appears conical), at the distance of three-quarters of a mile to the southeast of the town, between Duka and Szöd, the continuation of which, in numerous eastern windings, reaches the ridge of the Cserhát. On the northeast of this bare eminence, in a rather narrow valley, lies the village of Duka on the brook Gombás; southwest, however, and more in the direction of the Danube, is the village of Szöd. Between it and the eminence the ground is covered with vineyards. We called the latter simply the "Szöd vineyards," and the bare eminence "the Duka mountain." For the sake of brevity I retain these appellations in what follows.

The brook Gombás flows in a straight direction from Duka toward Waizen as far as the southeastern outskirts of the town. Thence it turns to the left between Hétkápolna and Waizen toward the Danube. Not far from this turning-point it is crossed by the railway, and further down, shortly before it falls into the Danube (at the south end of Waizen), by the main road. Its bed is marshy, and at that time could be crossed on foot without danger by the troops only in two or at most three narrow parts, namely, on the space from Duka to the railway bridge near Waizen.

The ground between this brook and the Danube (forming the left banks of both) is gently undulating, and also free and open. The railway alone crosses it; but only at some places hinders the movements of cavalry and artillery. On the right bank of the brook Gombás, on the contrary, the ground soon becomes hilly.

Armin Görgei had occupied the Duka mountain with his vanguard returned from the pursuit. Thence about noon of the same day (15th of July) the advance of considerable Russian forces of all kinds of arms was remarked in the southeast. At the first news of it, Armin Görgei speedily left the camp at Hétkápolna with the main body of his column, advancing across the railway toward the Duka mountain and the Szöd vineyards in order to secure to himself those two points before the arrival of the Russians. This, however, was impossible, the advance of the enemy having been discovered much too late. Consequently not only had our outposts already been driven from the Duka mountain by numerous swarms of Cossacks, but even the columns of the enemy had broken into the Szöd vineyards, before Armin Görgei with his main body was able to reach the place. Now he could only render the debouching of the hostile columns from the vineyards in some measure more difficult, but by no means prevent it. In a short time he had opposed to him a force several times superior to that of his column (from 3000 to 4000 men, with ten guns), which at first pressed him back, till on his right General Nagy-Sándor with the first corps, leaning to the right on the Danube, advanced on the line of battle, and re-established the disturbed balance of the combat.

Meanwhile General Leiningen accelerated the approach of his troops. About three in the afternoon he arrived with them at the height of Waizen, turned the town on the east, hastened on the right bank of the brook Gombás at gun-range beyond the prolongation of our line of battle, took up a flanking position against the hostile right wing, and by the brisk fire of two batteries paralyzed the further attacks on Armin Görgei's feeble column.

Hereupon the enemy attempted an energetic attack with cavalry on our first corps. The first regiment of hussars (Kaiser), ordered forward by General Nagy-Sándor to a counter-attack, gave way before the enemy's superior numbers; nevertheless the shock which seemed to aim at dispersing our right wing relaxed, through the firm perseverance of some of our batteries.

From this moment the enemy evidently confined himself, in spite of the brisk action of our artillery, numerically superior to his, to maintaining himself on the open ground before the Duka mountain and the Szöd vineyards, which he had conquered by



at first pressing back Armin Görgei's isolated column. And as *our* day's task, on account of our troops being uncommonly fatigued must likewise be a purely defensive one, the further course of the combat, which continued for several hours, was characterized on both sides only by a fire of artillery, well sustained till nightfall.

Toward evening the enemy began to evacuate the field by degrees, drawing off his right wing across the Duka mountain, the rest of his line of battle through the Szöd vineyards.

Nevertheless his troops for security occupied these grounds.

Before night set in between the 15th and 16th of July, General Pöltenberg with the seventh corps and the army train likewise reached Waizen; but was directed to remain *en réserve* in the rear of it (at its northern extremity).

The resoluteness with which the enemy had attacked our position at Waizen, and his obstinate perseverance, in the effective range of our superior concentric fire of artillery, induced me to suspect that behind the corps which had just been beaten from the field, there was a near and strong reserve, and to anticipate on the following day a still more powerful attack.

I could consequently choose between preventing this attack by attempting to break through toward Gödöllő, or awaiting it at Waizen, and thus subordinate the beginning of the attempt to break through to the result of the next day's combat.

Considering our peculiar circumstances—that the troops were too fatigued to commence immediately the attempt at breaking through, and moreover were even without provisions for the following day (the 16th); further, that no dependence whatever could be placed on procuring them as they were needed during the operation, though where the troops then were they might probably be supplied for at least one day in advance, in the course of the following day, by means of the contributions already commenced in and around Waizen;—considering these circumstances, I determined to await in the position maintained before Waizen the hostile attack to be expected on the morrow.

But when, contrary to expectation, up to early in the afternoon of the 16th of July no attack had taken place; though the advanced hostile troops continued to occupy the Duka mountain and the Szöd vineyards; and as the reports of scouts agreed in stating that the camp of the hostile corps, which had been opposed to us on the preceding evening, and had since been con-

siderably reinforced by constant arrivals of fresh troops on the road from Azód, was stationed near Hartyán; I thought that, at all events in the course of the 16th, I must obtain the greatest possible certainty as to the probability of our intended attempt at breaking through being successful—and fixed four in the afternoon as the time for commencing this undertaking.

This was to consist of a forced reconnoitering toward Hartyán, executed by Armin Görgei's column.

However, before the time appointed, an advance of serried troops on the part of the enemy took place on the Duka mountain and in the Szöd vineyards; Duka itself was likewise occupied by him; and at the same time I heard from a trustworthy source that the greater part of the Russian main army was already posted directly opposite us, between Hartyán and Szöd.

The forced reconnoitering which had been commanded was now superfluous; nay it must on no account be executed, because it might easily involve us in a general engagement with the enemy, and thereby indirectly prevent the carrying out of the determination, to which I had suddenly come in consequence of the information I had received relative to the strength of the hostile forces concentrated before us.

This determination was nothing else than at once to give up the idea of breaking through toward Gödöllő, and attempt a junction between the corps under my command and our southern forces on the circuitous route by Lossoncz, Miskolcz, and Tokaj.

I chose this route, because it was scarcely possible for the Russian main army, which was at that moment concentrated in front of our position, to obstruct us in it. The Russians, it is true, on the line by Gyöngyös were only twenty-one (German) miles from Miskolcz, while we were twenty-five on that by Lossoncz. But as the enemy could not know with certainty that *Miskolcz* was our next object of operations until he had pursued us as far as Vadkert, he could not possibly reach this point with his main forces before us. For between Vadkert and Miskolcz there exists no shorter communication than by Lossoncz, if we except one of almost equal extent, but much less practicable—I mean the route by Romhány, Bercezel, Pata, and Gyöngyös.

With all this, I did not forget that it was possible we might find the road by Lossoncz to Miskolcz occupied by the Russian corps which in the beginning of the month had penetrated from

the upper Waag into the district of the mountain-towns ; besides which, it did not seem to me probable that we should encounter no hostile opposition at all : but—according to the information I had received relative to the total strength of the Russian army of intervention, and considering the strategic position of the hostile main body—such an opposition could not be made by any force sufficient to render doubtful the success of our *new* attempt at breaking through.

Only the *combination*—certainly very probable—of such an opposition with a continuous energetic pursuit from Waizen might, nay must be destructive to us.

But, notwithstanding this probability, I could not prefer the attempt at breaking through toward Gödöllö to that toward Tokaj ; because, even assuming an equally unfortunate issue to both operations, by the latter the greater part of the Russian army of intervention would be kept distant from the southern theatre of war far longer than by the former, or, in other words, the possibility of employing the southern forces *against the Austrians alone* would be secured to Dembinski. My further persevering in the attempt to break through toward Gödöllö would have offered to the Russian commander-in-chief—who, according to my information, had at his disposal then and there a force at least twice *mine*—a favorable opportunity to defeat me so completely, that for the total destruction of my troops a small part of his main body sent in pursuit would suffice, while the larger part would be immediately disposable for the offensive toward the south. If, on the contrary, we avoided the momentarily menacing superior attack of the enemy, by means of a rapid, organized retreat toward Lossonecz, for the purpose of afterward breaking through by Miskolecz and Tokaj ; then the Russian commander-in-chief could scarcely spare sufficient forces for the uninterrupted and permanent turning of his operations toward the south, in case his purpose was (as I supposed) to destroy my troops *on this side the Theiss* ; for, in my opinion, he could hope to effect this only if he, not regarding for the present the south of the country, should send his main body close after us from Waizen, simultaneously opposing to our head either the northern Russian corps, or some other part of the army—perhaps lying in the neighborhood of Miskolecz—in order to delay us, *coûte qui coûte*, until his main body had succeeded in overtaking us.



In the most favorable case, we could escape this danger only by gaining an advance over the pursuing hostile main body, which must be considerable enough to secure to us the time necessary for overcoming all the accumulated obstacles to our retreat behind the Theiss.

Any considerable advance, however (whether it would be sufficient for the purpose indicated could evidently at present not be known), was to be gained from our position before Waizen only by means of a nightly retreat; because as the enemy surveyed from the Duka mountain not only our entire position, but even the line of retreat (the main road from Waizen to the upper comitates), we could not mask our retreat in the day time in any way.

To maintain our position before Waizen till nightfall was consequently a necessity equally unavoidable and embarrassing;—embarrassing, because the enemy might at any moment attack us with uncommon superiority, and thereby prevent me from executing my intention of deceiving him, by retreating during the night.

Fortunately, however, he stopped the advance which, as was mentioned, he had begun between three and four in the afternoon on the Duka mountain and in the Szöd vineyards, while still out of the reach of our artillery, and afterward remained quiet.

About seven in the evening I thought we had then no further attack to fear that day (the 16th of July), and sent for the chief of the general staff, the commanders of corps, and my elder brother Armin, that I might orally communicate to them my resolutions, as they have just been stated.

After this had been done, I proposed to the commanders of corps to leave it to chance to decide which of the three army corps should cover the departure of the others from the position before Waizen.

This proposal was accepted, and the lot fell upon General Leiningen, who with his corps (the third) was to have the charge of the rear-guard during the next twenty-four hours.

Based on this decision, I ordered the retreat to be commenced with the twilight in the following order: at the head the seventh corps (Pöltenberg), with the army train; then the first corps (Nagy-Sándor), and after it Armin Görgei's column, in uninterrupted succession; the third army corps (Count Leiningen), how-

ever, as rear-guard, was not to follow till after midnight (but still before daybreak of the 17th of July); further, in order to prevent the enemy's patrols from discovering our retreat during the night, the first and third corps, as well as Armin Görgei's column, had to leave behind them on their departure from the position the outposts (all cavalry) stationed before it, with an order not to hasten after the army till *after* daybreak.

I fixed an hour after midnight for the departure of the third corps (the rear-guard), because by then the other parts of the army, together with the army train, could have passed the serpentine way across the Waizen mountain, about half a (German) mile to the north of Waizen, and thus have got far enough in advance of the rear-guard, always assuming that the movements of the troops were not delayed by any unforeseen hindrance. This, however, without my having had any presentiment of it, was unfortunately already prepared, at the very time when I gave the just-mentioned order for retreat to my sub-commanders.

My departure from Komorn had as its immediate consequence, that all the politically compromised civilians who were living in the neighborhood, and who happened to have greater confidence in my lucky star than in that of General Klapka, joined the army—unfortunately not on foot or on horseback, but in carriages. The example of these unfortunates found on their way thither imitators in abundance, and this to such a degree that the army by the 14th of July (the day after its departure from Komorn) was burdened with the unwelcome appendage of several thousand vehicles of various capacity. Considering the prospective impossibility of getting rid permanently of this calamity, there remained no other means for securing freedom to the movements of the army as far as possible than forcibly to join these vehicles with the army train (which could be dispensed with during action) and the riding sutlers in one body, and to include in the calculation of operations their disposal, regulated by circumstances, on points which, as secure as we could make them, lay outside the range of the manœuvres of the army. This had been done on the 15th of July. The command of this body, to which was added an escort sufficient to maintain order on the road and in the camp, was intrusted to a superior officer of the general staff, who happened not to be indispensable to the army. On the 15th of July he received directions to remain with the train till further

orders at Toronya, about two miles to the northeast of Waizen. Now in the evening of the 16th—after the retreat by Lossonecz had been decided upon—the train had to be conducted from Toronya by Nógrád to the line of retreat of the army, and in advance of it as far as Vadkert. In the course of the 16th, however, rumors had reached Toronya, that the Russians had been destroyed on the preceding day before Waizen, and—what was certainly not improbable—that Austrian troops had crossed at Gran from the right to the left bank of the Danube. In consequence of these reports the train and its commander left Toronya without orders, to save themselves from the dreaded Austrians in the immediate vicinity of the army, already supposed to be victoriously advancing toward Gödöllő; and by the time the order to lead the train from Toronya by Nógrád to Vadkert was about being sent to its commander, the thousand upon thousand vehicles were again in Waizen.

This indeed was a circumstance which might delay our retreat for several hours, consequently till late in the morning of the following day, and, considering the immediate proximity of the hostile army, might result in the fatal defeat of at least the third corps. In view of our critical situation before Waizen, I was nevertheless obliged to adhere to my original determination, and commence the nightly retreat, even at the risk of the above-mentioned danger.

Accordingly the unexpected news of the presence in Waizen of the train did not make any change in the already issued orders for retreat; but it put an end to the consideration which had hitherto been shown by me toward the unfortunate fugitive civilians, out of natural compassion, sometimes even at the expense of my duty as leader of the army.

From the preceding description of the situation of Waizen and its immediate environs, the reader knows of a brook there, which, in itself insignificant, but having high and steep banks, rises in the near mountains, and flows toward the Danube at about gun-range north of the town. This local impediment consequently was situated directly in the rear of the army, and had to be crossed during its retreat. The only means of doing this was the wooden bridge, over which runs the main road from Waizen to the upper comitates, our line of retreat. This obstacle, it is true, might also be avoided; but not in the night-time without



inevitable danger to the order of the retreat ; because there was at that time no moonlight, and not to betray our nightly manœuvre to the enemy, we were obliged to dispense with any lights. For a second bridge, however, we had no materials at hand ; besides, the time that remained was insufficient for the construction of even a less considerable bridge with *unprepared* materials, as I had resolved on the retreat by night only a few hours before its commencement, and had not previously thought of the necessity for such a manœuvre. The army, indeed, carried with it the staple of a bridge of four supports taken from the Austrians ; but, considering the probable vehemence of the enemy's pursuit, it could not be employed in the formation of a bridge without the risk of losing it ; and, taking into account the number of not insignificant waters by which our new line of operations was intersected, I wished to preserve to the army its sole portable bridge for future use in cases possibly still more critical. Under these circumstances the whole army must consequently pass the one bridge in the retreat from its present position. This was, after all, connected with no more uncommon difficulties than in general any nightly retreat on a single road. It was only necessary to prevent interruption ! But this very task—practicable with an orderly mobile force relieved of all superfluous vehicles, by choosing an order of march whose breadth does not exceed that of the defile to be passed—with the presence of several thousand vehicled fugitives, each of whom, thinking only of his own safety, wished to be foremost, where the strategic instinct common to all led him to scent the greatest security against danger in the direction taken by the troops ;—with the presence of such elements and in *such number*, namely, to prevent all interruption during the retreat—seemed to me absolutely impossible without the use of Draconic measures against the unfortunate fugitives.

At dawn of the following day (the 17th of July) I was, however, alas, already conscious that this feat had not been accomplished, in spite of all the Draconic measures I had not failed to have recourse to during the night.

Hardly had the seventh corps, on the evening of the 16th of July, begun the retreat by defiling over the bridge, when the herd of vehicled fugitives, immediately guessing the meaning of this manœuvre, likewise began to move from their encampments—partly in the interior of the town, partly north of it, close to the

seventh corps—toward the saving bridge. Lines of hussars kept off the lateral pressure on the main road, to preserve it clear for the troops. With the increasing darkness and the growing desire of the alarmed mass to get for safety across the bridge, the duty of these lines became ever more difficult, and during the night they were repeatedly broken through in several places. At each irruption, in a twinkling the main road was choked up with vehicles. To make the stream flow back was impossible. It could scarcely be dammed up again along the main road. Those vehicles of every description, which, in consequence of such irruptions, were once on the main road, in order to prevent a still greater delay had each time to be arranged as speedily as possible and taken into the marching column of the troops. This measure, which was absolutely unavoidable, became a source of very frequent and lasting interruption; for hardly had those fugitives, whom chance favored in the repeated irruptions through the lines, passed over the bridge, than they were no longer in any haste. Relieved from the torment of fear for their own skin, they soon found the sweetest consolation for their lately endured sufferings in a sound sleep. Their animals had of course still less reason without an external impulse, to refuse rest and repose; and even to the troops the opportunity of snatching a short bivouac on the road was not always unwelcome.

The seventh corps, the army train, the first corps, and Armin Görgei's column, were to have passed after midnight not only the bridge, but also the winding road across the Waizen mountain. Instead of this, however, even at daybreak (17th of July), besides the seventh corps only a small part of the army train and the first corps had passed the bridge. The greater part of the army train—closely hemmed in by the fatal private equipages—could not even be got in motion; while the rest of the first corps, followed by Armin Görgei's column, was just about forcing its way through the crowd of vehicles that reached far back into the town.

At the extreme northern end of Waizen a carriage-road branches off from the main road in an eastern direction, across the railroad, which runs close along the latter, on which likewise it is possible to reach Rétság and Vadkert, although with much more difficulty than on the main road itself.

Besides the main road I originally intended to make use also

of this secondary one between Waizen and Vadkert for accomplishing the nightly retreat. I was, however, deterred from doing so by the consideration, that from the divergence at first of both lines the army would be divided just at the most critical moment of the retreat into two columns separated several miles from each other and by impracticable hilly ground. Subsequently, when informed of the presence, alike disastrous and unexpected, of the vehicled civic fugitives in Waizen, I thought I could employ this carriage-way at least for removing these unfortunates out of the range of the manœuvres of the troops. But even this could not well be done; for the whole mass of private vehicles, in order to gain this road, would have had to cross the main road, and this—from peculiar local circumstances—in a single column, one vehicle at a time; by which the retreat of the two-thirds of the army which were encamped south of Waizen would have been delayed at least five or six hours, and consequently it would have been impossible to effect it under cover of night. So that this secondary road had to be left the whole night without advantage being taken of it. But now the multitude of private vehicles, in spite of all counter-measures, was already in unlimited possession of the main road, and therefore the use of this secondary one had become imperative, in order more quickly to remove out of the way of the troops advancing from behind, the vehicles densely thronged together on the main road.

The strategic instinct of the vehicled fugitive civilians, however, strove against the requirement to seek for safety on a road along which no troops had advanced before them. The fear of being thereby separated forever from the protecting proximity of the army—the fixed idea, “only he who passes the bridge is saved!” caused a general passive resistance, the object of which was the maintaining of the main road, and the tenacity of which scoffed at the severest measures of coercion.

Consequently the situation of the greater part of our army about dawn of the 17th of July, already sketched in what precedes, given synoptically was somewhat as follows:

One half of the first corps, closely followed by Armin Görgei's column, in the interior of the town, hindered on all sides by a crowd of vehicles literally unbounded not only from continuing the retreat, but also in its movements generally; the third corps,



on the contrary, outside the town—one half on the causeway of the railroad in a long narrow marching-column, the other half descending in sections along the brook Gombás toward the railroad. So that of these parts of the army, in spite of the threatening proximity of the enemy, only the latter half of the third corps was able to act; and even it at the moment was not in a condition to do any thing considerable toward the protection of the columns wedged in the interior of the town.

Moreover, General Nagy-Sándor before his departure from the position south of Waizen had drawn in his out-posts, and thus rendered a surprise on the part of the enemy possible.

With the first dawn of morning some Russian cavalry regiments rushed on to Nagy-Sándor's former position, and, not meeting with any resistance, reached, unimpeded and unobserved by us, about the height of Hétkápolna. Here they stood already in the rear of the advanced troops who—according to the dispositions—had been left behind in front of his evacuated position by Armin Görgei.

The latter indeed discovered the menacing attack time enough to prevent a surprise of their main body, already on its toilsome retreat through the crowd of vehicles in the interior of the town. But on these troops themselves the sudden emerging of the enemy in their rear had made the discouraging impression of a successful surprise; and to the bad consequences of similar impressions belonged, among other things, the constant disposition of the surprised troops to see spectres.

Armin Görgei, informed of the hostile advance, without hesitation led the main body of his column from the interior of the town against the enemy; made good his position near Hétkápolna; disposed his falling-back advanced troops as a protection to the extreme flank on the left toward the brook Gombás; and—for the purpose especially of apprising the third corps as speedily as possible—immediately attacked the approaching hostile masses with artillery. He succeeded in stopping them for some time, nay even in pressing them back. His extreme left wing, however, still laboring under the moral after-pains of the late surprise, imagined meanwhile that it saw in the men of the third corps on the other side the brook Gombás the enemy's turning troops, and in consequence took to flight toward the southern principal entrance of Waizen, and soon carried with it the whole

cavalry and artillery of the column. Armin Görgei, unable to stop this *débandade*, and himself led astray by the erroneous report of his left wing, drew back likewise the battalions, already abandoned by the cavalry and artillery—not through the town, however, but close to the bank of the Danube.

The enemy with celerity and rare valor took advantage of this sudden falling off in our resistance; broke into the town itself before the cavalry of Armin Görgei's column recovered from its fright, and in the first assault captured four guns. A part of the infantry of the column, however, had soon regained its courage, and now hastened from the Danube into the interior of the town to the place of the greatest danger; almost simultaneously a battalion of the third corps appeared on the menaced point from the opposite direction (the railroad); and three of the lost pieces were instantly retaken from the enemy: one remained in his possession, and this he succeeded in securing, although immediately driven out of the town, and obliged by the third corps to continue his retreat toward Szöd.

For General Leiningen, on the first discharge of cannon from Armin Görgei's column, had one half of his corps immediately advanced again on the right bank of the brook Gombás up toward Duka, while he himself hastened forward with the other half along the railroad on the ground situated between the brook Gombás and the Danube. Informed during this movement of the enemy's presence in Waizen, Count Leiningen dispatched one battalion (as we have seen, it came just in time to assist in recapturing the lost guns) into the interior of the town, while two companies were detached by him to occupy speedily the southern outlet, with the intention of cutting off the retreat of the hostile cavalry who had broken into Waizen. The town, however, had already been evacuated by the enemy when these companies reached their destination. And not till now did it become evident that the enemy could scarcely have intended a serious continued attack, but at most a reconnoitering of our strength and position. Only to the accidental circumstances, that General Nagy-Sándor, when leaving his position, had drawn in his outposts in a manner alike inconsiderate and arbitrary, and that the cavalry of Armin Görgei's column had taken our troops for the enemy's, was this advance indebted for a result which certainly resembled a successful surprise.

Moreover, we also owed to the just-related conflict, in spite of the significant loss which we therein suffered, an advantage which in our then situation was by no means to be despised.

I have before mentioned the peculiar obstinacy with which the luckless proprietors of the private vehicles which were densely thronged together at the northern end of Waizen, in spite of the palpable impossibility of getting away speedily on the main road, had been striving against the intimation that they were to leave it, and take the eastern by-road to Vadkert. An end was now suddenly put to this opposition by the cry of terror: "The Cossacks are in the town!" and still more by the brisk discharge of musketry which was simultaneously heard. The persevering cannonade which soon afterward began, at the advance of the third corps, finally aroused likewise those fugitives who had already crossed the bridge from their indolent feeling of safety, and stimulated them to greater speed. In consequence of these moral influences of the conflict on the minds of the civilians, the departure of the masses of vehicles out of the range of the manœuvres of our troops was accelerated in more ways than one.

And while General Leiningen with one half of the brave third corps energetically pursued the hostile troops of surprise on the ground between the brook Gombás and the Danube to near the Szöd vineyards, and forced the enemy by this resolute demeanor, as well as by the simultaneous advance of the other half of his corps on the right bank of the Gombás, to the preparatory development of his whole force, involving a new loss of time; and while both halves of the third corps disputed every inch of ground in giving way to the greatly superior enemy;—the whole mass of private vehicles was successfully removed out of the range of the troops, nay even the rest of the army train was set in motion. The latter, when General Leiningen had again effected his retreat as far as at the height of Waizen, was already advanced beyond the windings of the road on the Waizen mountain. This remainder of the army train was closely followed by the rest of the first corps; while Armin Görgei's column, designed to support the third corps when drawing back fighting, partly on the main road over the bridge, partly on the open tract of ground to the east of it and of the railroad, occupied the slopes covered with vineyards projecting southeast of the Waizen mountain, for the purpose of forming here, in the next phase of combat, the ex-



treme left wing of the rear-guard position, to be taken up by one-half of the third corps on the southern declivity of the Waizen mountain, below the winding road.

The enemy advanced one part of his forces on the right bank of the Gombás and directly east of the railroad, to attack the position of Armin Görgei's column; with his main force, however, he marched simultaneously through the town of Waizen, and debouched from its northern outlet at the moment when the last sections of the third corps were passing over the bridge. The brisk fire of artillery, which he forthwith directed against this point, was perhaps intended to prevent us from destroying the bridge. It was, however, unsuccessful: the bridge was burnt down; and the delay thereby caused to the pursuit of the enemy on the main road secured to the half of the third corps, which had been destined for the rear-guard position on the Waizen mountain, the time necessary for marching up.

This position, whose left wing was formed by Armin Görgei's column, which had previously occupied the southeastern projecting declivities of the Waizen mountain, was now maintained against the energetic attacks of the enemy until the other half of the third corps had gained an advance of about half a mile, in order to obtain the time needed for taking up, further back, but still before Rétság, a second rear-guard position, in which the troops just now in action were to be waited for, and relieved from the rear-guard service.

To continue the rear-guard combat on the Waizen mountain beyond the point of time indicated, seemed to me not advisable, because I thought I must apprehend an advance on the part of the enemy directly against Vadkert, on the by-road leaving Waizen in an eastern direction, and consequently, with a longer remaining on the Waizen mountain, the endangering of the further retreat to Lossonez. Vadkert had already been fixed, according to this combination, as the point of retreat for the day.

The retreat from the position on the Waizen mountain was accordingly opened with fighting, after about an hour's combat by Armin Görgei's column, which was far advanced in position, and for this very reason was more violently attacked, and continued in like manner by the whole rear-guard as far back as to the position of the second half of the third corps, which now, entering on the rear-guard service, encountered the hotly pursuing

enemy, and thereby delayed him again until that half of the third corps which had just been relieved, together with Armin Görgei's column, had reached Rétság.

In Rétság I charged the seventh corps (General Pöltenberg) with the protection of the further retreat as far as Balassa-Gyarmat, and determined at the same time on breaking up Armin Görgei's column, with the intention of employing its contingent so as to equalize, as far as possible, the striking differences in the strength of the three army corps.

The enemy closely followed that half of the third corps, which had long resolutely opposed him before Rétság, and commenced his next attack with briskly cannonading the place—evidently on the supposition that it was still occupied by us. The natural consequence was that Rétság caught fire on several points.

General Pöltenberg with the seventh army corps had meanwhile taken up a tenable position on the heights behind Rétság, and maintained it until nightfall in spite of the uncommonly violent artillery attacks of the superior enemy.

Just at the commencement of this contest our main body started from Rétság to Vadkert. When darkness had put an end to the combat, it was followed by General Pöltenberg with his corps as far as about half distance between the two places, which here begun its nightly bivouac in compact battle-array *à cheval* of the road. The main body encamped the same night (between the 17th and 18th of July) at Vadkert.

The further retreat to Balassa-Gyarmat was not begun till daybreak of the 18th. At the same time General Pöltenberg evacuated his bivouac (between Vadkert and Rétság), and followed our main body at the distance of about half a mile without interruption or being overtaken by the enemy, till he had crossed the brook Lókos, which, flowing from Cserhát to the river Eipel, crosses the main road between Vadkert and Balassa-Gyarmat, nearer to the former place.

On the commanding right bank of this brook General Pöltenberg had his corps marched up in an advantageous defensive position in order to await the pursuing enemy, and delay him some time; thereby to enable our main body again to get further in advance.

From the moment that the seventh corps had been drawn up on the right bank of the brook Lókos until the night between the

20th and 21st of July, I took not the least part in the conduct of the army. Since the evening of the 16th having again personally led and superintended its movements, it had not been possible for me to avoid great exertion even of my physical strength. In consequence of this the wound in my head got worse again. On the morning of the 18th I was completely unfit for service, and remained so during the course of the next two days.

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## CHAPTER LXVIII.

In this state of unfitness for service, into which I had fallen on the 18th of July, I was brought the same day as far as Lossoncz, and on the following to Rimaszombat. Here I remained from the evening of the 19th till the morning of the 21st. An uninterrupted rest of twenty-four hours alleviated my physical suffering at least sufficiently to enable me in part again to fulfill my duties as leader of the army—in so far as this was possible under such extraordinary circumstances as the then existing ones, and in a condition which still continued to cripple every *higher* physical as well as moral exertion.

In the afternoon of the 20th I received the first report of the events which had happened in the army since the morning of the 18th. They were in substance as follow :

General Pöltenberg, after he had given battle to the pursuing enemy in the forenoon of the 18th with the seventh corps at the brook Lókos, for the purpose of delaying him, and had thereupon retreated fighting as far as Balassa-Gyarmat, was relieved there from the rear-guard service by General Nagy-Sándor with the first corps.

Unlike Generals Leiningen and Pöltenberg, General Nagy-Sándor neglected his duty as leader of the rear-guard. Instead of delaying the enemy in his pursuit as often and as long as possible—even at the cost of sensible losses—and thereby securing to the main body, if no more, at least the time indispensable for feeding the horses of the cavalry and the train—he commenced his function as commander of the rear-guard with a precipitate



retreat, and was with his own corps (the first) always literally at the heels of the main body (the third and seventh corps).

A. F. Ludány, halfway between Balassa-Gyarmat and Losoncz, had originally been destined by the chief of the general staff as a resting-point for our main body. But as it had not been possible to find out on the whole extent from Balassa-Gyarmat to A. F. Ludány any position which appeared sufficiently tenable to General Nagy-Sándor for protecting the proposed bivouac of the army at the latter place, the main body—of course closely followed by General Nagy-Sándor with the first corps—had to retreat during the day more than half a mile further, namely, to beyond the river Eipel at Ráros.

On account of the too great exhaustion of the troops (the distance from Waizen to Ráros, which had been made within two days, amounts to ten miles), it was indispensably necessary to stay here for the night. General Nagy-Sándor, with the first corps, had to maintain the defile of the bridge at Ráros, easily defensible, only till dawn of the next day (19th of July), while the main body of the army bivouacked a short distance further behind, on the main road.

However, a false alarm—such as happens almost every night when before the enemy—sufficed to impose on General Nagy-Sándor to such a degree, that he evacuated the position at Ráros during the pitch-dark night; thus forcing the main body at the same time again to commence the retreat.

And what had not hitherto been effected by the extraordinary hardships of the last two days, the critical situation at Waizen, the repeatedly unequal combat with a far superior enemy, nay even the peculiarities of an uninterrupted retreat in the face of the pursuing foe, absolutely demoralizing even the best troops—namely, the loosening of the bonds of discipline in the third and seventh army corps—General Nagy-Sándor now accomplished within the shortest time, by allowing himself to be so miserably shaken by a false alarm in the scrupulous performance of the duty intrusted to him of providing for our security.

The darkness of the night, the drowsiness of the officers and men, exhausted to the last degree, were circumstances in which a panic terror—as it had been spread throughout the camp of the main army by General Nagy-Sándor's senseless flight before a phantom—could hardly fail to be followed by the complete disso-

lution of the third and seventh corps, consequently of two-thirds of the army; and as the condition of the first corps may be conceived not to have been remarkably orderly, the army in fact owed its continued existence only to the fortunate accident, that the enemy, who had energetically continued the pursuit with superior forces as far as Balassa-Gyarmat, had suddenly desisted at about a mile beyond it; whereby, on the following day (the 19th), the rallying at Lossoncz of the troops dispersed in all directions was possible. Our losses in men and horses, however, far exceeded in number the victims of an extraordinarily hot day's battle.

Moreover, the unavoidable massy appendage to the army of the equipped fugitives had contributed its full share toward increasing the confusion during the nightly surprise executed with rare success by General Nagy-Sándor on our own main body. In order to get them out of the way of the army, at least for the next decisive days, they were again combined into a train, separate from the army train, and, under an escort, sent on a by-road, which flanked on the north the further line of operations.

In the afternoon of the 20th of July, when I was first informed of these events of the last two days, the seventh army corps was at Rimaszombat, the third at Osgyán, and the first as rear-guard at Apátfalva behind Lossoncz. The chief of the general staff had thought it necessary immediately to give General Nagy-Sándor—who had hitherto done any thing rather than meet the requirements of a commander of the rear-guard—an opportunity in this service—in case the pursuit should be recommenced on the part of the enemy—to save his honor by accomplishing at least half as much as had been done by Generals Leiningen and Pöltenberg in the course of the 17th and 18th of July.

I could not but approve of this measure the more, as the above disposition of the three army corps, during the new phase on which our operation had entered on reaching the point of Lossoncz, seemed to me, on the whole, to be the most judicious.

From Waizen as far as Lossoncz our operation had been very simple both in object and execution. Our only aim was to gain the points of Balassa-Gyarmat and Lossoncz if possible before the arrival there of the northern Russian corps, which had entered through the Arva. And the means recognized as indispensable for the successful accomplishment of this task were, as we have seen, speed in the retrograde movement, and repeated combats by

the rear-guard *à tout risque*, for the purpose of impeding as much as possible the pressing on behind of the hostile force, destructive to the order of the retreat.

From Lossoncz onward, however, the execution of our operation was certainly complicated, though the final object was not. It had as hitherto to be protected in the rear, while at the same time the obstacles in front of it must be removed.

The first task, perilous as it had been during the retreat from Balassa-Gyarmat, now seemed suddenly to be the *less difficult* of the two; after that the supposition respecting the hostile counter-operation, which I had entertained while in Waizen (that the enemy would constantly follow us closely with his main body), had been proved, by the relaxation in his pursuit, which had become perceptible by the evening of the 18th of July, to be erroneous; and that instead of this supposition, it was now to be assumed that the enemy had divided his main body on the 17th of July, (when still at Waizen), had followed us with one half only as far as the first passage across the Eipel behind Balassa-Gyarmat, from thence, however, had turned aside by Szécsény, Lócz, and Pásztó to Pétervására (with the intention of preventing a possible breaking through on our part toward the south), while he had immediately directed the other half of his main body, in forced marches, on the Gyöngyös road toward Miskolcz, in order to hinder us from breaking through on the east.

(The energetic pursuit as far as the first passage of the Eipel behind Balassa-Gyarmat, near Hugyag, might have had the tactical object, to profit as much as possible by the victory at Waizen; and at the same time the twofold strategic one, to render impracticable to us, on the one hand, a return to Komorn, on the other—perhaps assuming the probability of an attempt to break through in a southern direction by Gyöngyös or Hatvan—a flank-march to the left, supposed to be intended on our part, by Szécsény and Lócz, into the valley of the Zagyva.)

Consequently the sudden relaxation of the hostile pursuit, combined with the simultaneous information of scouts, that the northern Russian corps was already on its march from Altsohl toward Lossoncz, led me to the conclusion, that the strategic position which the enemy was now striving to take up, and which he hoped to reach in good time, might perhaps be the following:

Rimaszombat—Northern corps.



Pétervására—That part of the main body of the army which had pursued us till the evening of the 18th.

Miskolcz—The rest of the main body.

It was further to be expected that the enemy would secure to himself, whatever it cost, the possibility of reaching the point Miskolcz with the remainder of his army before us; that he would do all in his power to delay our march to the same point; that we should accordingly encounter opposition probably at the first important river-passage—perhaps at the Sájó, between Dubicsány and Vadna.

In the face of these probabilities, however, I could by no means mistake the far higher importance of the task of the van-guard than of the rear-guard. For even if the latter completely failed us—as had been the case at Ráros—the final aim of our operation (the eastern breaking through by Miskolcz and Tokaj) could nevertheless be attained, if the van-guard performed its duty, and prevented the accumulation of an equal hostile force at Miskolcz, by gaining this point betimes, in spite of all opposing efforts on the part of the enemy. But if the van-guard refused, then the last possibility of breaking through was lost—even if the rear-guard did its part ever so gloriously.

Consequently—mindful, moreover, of the rule to keep the best sub-commander with his troops *en réserve* for the moment of the final decision—I could not but acknowledge the dispositions given to the three army corps by the chief of the general staff during my total unfitness for service to be most excellently adapted for the purpose. General Nagy-Sándor was the least capable of the commanders of corps, and at the same time the least to be relied upon: to him, under the above-developed conjunctures, *only the rear-guard* of the army could be intrusted. The performance of the duty assigned to the leader of the van-guard might be expected from General Pöltenberg with much more certainty than from General Nagy-Sándor; while General Leiningen, the best of all, must necessarily remain *en réserve* with his corps.

For the 21st of July General Pöltenberg, with the seventh corps, was accordingly ordered from Rimaszombat in advance to gain the passage over the Sájó, between Dubicsány and Vadna; General Leiningen, with the third corps *en réserve*, from Osgyán to Putnok; General Nagy-Sándor, with the first corps, as a protection in the rear, from Apátfalva to Rimaszécs.

## CHAPTER LXIX.

IN the night between the 20th and 21st of July two Russian officers appeared in Rimaszombat ; a captain of hussars, Katlarow, and a lieutenant of artillery, Count Rüdiger.

They had been dispatched on the evening of the 20th as trumpets by the Russian Colonel Chrulow, at first only to the commander of our rear-guard at Apátfalva. General Nagy-Sándor, however, directed them to me personally, and directed the chief of his general staff to escort them to the head-quarters.

When before me, they declared that, in consequence of an order from the commander-in-chief of the Russian army, Field-marshal Prince Paszkiewicz, they had been charged by the commander of corps and general of cavalry, Count Rüdiger, and directly by the commander of the van-guard, Colonel Chrulow, to summon me, in the name of his majesty the Czar, to order my troops to lay down their arms, to disperse, and every man to return to his own home ;—unless we complied, we should immediately be attacked by the Russian army.

I asked in the first instance to see the credentials of the trumpets.

They possessed nothing of the kind, and asserted that they had received only an oral commission.

I hereupon remarked that, without credentials, it was impossible for them to convince me of the authenticity of their mission.

They, on the contrary, opined that there was time enough for this ; I should only, for the present, conclude with them an armistice of forty-eight hours to open the negotiations.

The mere *threat* of an attack had come on me rather unexpectedly after the events of the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of July, and had led me forthwith to conjecture that the summons to lay down our arms was but the mask of the real commission. The sudden proposal of an armistice of forty-eight hours seemed to confirm this conjecture ; to obtain this armistice appeared to be the real object of the negotiation ; the aim of the armistice, however, could be no other than the delay of our retreat.

Hence I deduced the gratifying conclusion that the enemy already despaired of gaining time enough the point Miskolcz ; and I of course thought of any thing rather than of accepting the armistice.

But hoping to elicit from the two trumpets, in the course of a more prolonged conference, some involuntary revelation relative to the position of the hostile army, I resolved to defer as long as possible a positive refusal of the armistice.

I consequently made as if I entered into the idea of laying down our arms ; nay, in order to render the deception as complete as I could, and to induce the trumpets to speak as much as possible, I even requested them plainly to inform me, whether we might not expect any positively favorable conditions in case of laying down our arms.

Only one of them, Count Rüdiger, spoke German. He was generally the spokesman ; and after a short dialogue with his comrade, unintelligible to me, he offered, in reply to my question, the two following conditions :

1. For the men : free departure to their homes, where they should remain exempt from any constraint to further military service.

2. For the generals and officers : the same, and an unobstructed passing over into the imperial Russian service with such rank as they held in the Hungarian army.

I explained to Count Rüdiger, that the army required above all things a guarantee for the future of *the country*.

Hereupon he thought himself justified in promising also the intercession of the Czar with the Emperor of Austria for the country.

The declarations of Count Rüdiger were laconic ; moreover he showed himself sparing of words. The comedy began to weary me, as the prospect of learning any thing of importance as to the position of the Russian army was ever more and more enveloped in clouds by the taciturnity of the count.

Captain Katlarow was evidently far more communicative than his comrade ; he spoke, however, only Russian and French, in the latter of which I can not converse without extreme difficulty.

Nevertheless, I determined to try my luck with Captain Katlarow, and to continue the further conversation with him. I



found a suitable opportunity of doing so by requesting Count Rüdiger to write down the stipulated conditions.

While he was occupied in complying with my request, I chose as an opening to the conversation with Captain Katlarow the question, whether he would forward a letter from me to Prince Paszkiewicz.

"Then you accept the armistice!" Captain Katlarow interrupted me.

After this interjection I no longer doubted that an armistice was the only object of the trumpets.

Captain Katlarow had followed me on to the slippery ground, to which I intended to allure him, more quickly than I had expected. I hastened to take advantage of this favorable circumstance.

With the armistice, I answered, we are all in good time; and added—beating about the bush—as a reason, that the Russian army was just now executing movements which obliged me for the present uninterruptedly to continue the retreat.

"But it will not be possible for you much longer to continue your route," replied Captain Katlarow in evident haste; "for *you* march this way," (he accompanied this proof by drawings with his finger on the table,) "and *here* arrives Rüdiger, *here* Tschegodajew, and *here* follows Grabbe."

The drawings with his finger perfectly corresponded, on the one hand, with the information of the scouts, that the northern Russian corps (Grabbe) was marching from the mountain-towns against Lossoncz; on the other hand, with our supposition, based on their intermitting in the pursuit, that a part of the hostile main body (Rüdiger), having turned off from Balassa-Gyarmat to the south, was operating against us by Pétervására; while the remnant of the main body (Tschegodajew) was attempting to reach Miskolcz before us.

The coincidence of the finger-drawings of the Russian trumpet with my conjectures as to the hostile plan of operations appeared to me to be more than accidental.

I could not possibly expect detailed explanations from a subordinate officer of the hostile army. I contented myself, therefore, with what I had learned; and the only thing I still thought desirable was to delay the return of the hostile trumpets to their camp, in order that General Nagy-Sándor, who had to evacuate

his rear-guard position at Apátfalva at daybreak on the 21st of July, might gain an advance in the further retreat. This was obtained as a matter of course; the trumpets declaring themselves ready to take a letter from me to Field-marshal Prince Paszkiewicz (namely, my written reply to the summons to lay down our arms, and to accept an armistice,) and I needed a certain time to draw it up.

In the ministerial council of the 26th of June, I had, among other things, proposed to the government, that while the Austrians were attacked with all our might, it should enter into negotiations with the Russians, were it only to compromise them with the Austrians, and thereby, for our advantage, give more foundation to the want of agreement, from which—as the history of war shows—the operations of allied armies generally suffer.

Personally, however, I felt no inclination to take the initiative in the execution of this proposal. But now, as the Russians had begun to negotiate, I certainly thought the occasion favorable for realizing, at least experimentally, my own original idea. I accordingly secured to myself the opportunity of a further exchange of trumpets between our army and that of the Russians, by requesting, in my written answer to Prince Paszkiewicz, a delay of forty-eight hours for the definitive declaration to the request to lay down our arms, under the pretext that I must previously consult the army itself, whether it was willing to lay down its arms on the stipulated conditions. The offered armistice, however, I declined, on the feigned reason that our troops were not familiar with this usage of war.

The reader is aware that I had believed the invitation to conclude an armistice to be a mere stratagem, the object of which was to retard our retreat, for the purpose of enabling a Russian corps to prevent us from pursuing our route to Tokaj.

This offer of an armistice was certainly a stratagem; but its final object—as was subsequently evident—a much more insignificant one than that supposed.

The Russian Colonel Chrulow had been charged with three squadrons of mixed cavalry and two guns, to recommence the pursuit of our retreating army, interrupted in the evening of the 18th of July.

With this feeble column Colonel Chrulow on the 20th of July reached Lossoncz, and found himself next moment directly opposite

to a Hungarian corps of about 9000 men and forty guns (our first corps at Apátfalva), consequently in evident danger of being destroyed, since he was distant some days' march from every support.

It was this danger which Colonel Chrulow was striving to escape by negotiating.

Colonel Chrulow, in spite of the isolated situation in which he found himself, with his small forces in face of our first corps, ran, after all—of which he could certainly have no presentiment—positively not the least danger; because it happened by chance, fortunately for him, that General Nagy-Sándor was then the commander of this corps, and that he—to judge by his conduct in the night between the 18th and 19th of July at Ráros, where no enemy had been opposed to him—was even glad not to be attacked by Colonel Chrulow.

After the Russian trumpets, with my written answer, the substance of which I have indicated above, had left the head-quarters again, in the course of the night between the 20th and 21st of July, and were escorted back to their camp, I had to consider whether I should communicate or not to the army the negotiation into which I had entered with them.

The prospect of the demoralizing consequences, which must follow the scandal of a general discussion about the expediency of an act of submission, spoke *against* its promulgation.

It was, however, impossible to prevent it from becoming generally known that hostile trumpets had appeared at the head-quarters, and this was the first time such a thing had occurred. There was no doubt that it would give rise in the ranks of the army to more extravagant conjectures about what had been the real object of the hostile trumpets, the deeper the genuine truth of the matter remained enveloped in darkness.

I had seriously to fear that my silence about the matter in question would only nourish the suspicion that I was in treacherous communication with the enemies of the fatherland.

This suspicion did not date originally from the days of July at Komorn. Its first source was likewise neither in my refusal to take reprisals for the executions at Presburg; nor in the fact that the garrison of Ofen had not been put to the sword; nor in the siege of Ofen, and the simultaneous interruption of the offensive against the Austrian main army; nor in my declared en-



deavor not to conduct the war in a manner contradictory to the character of the nation; nor in the removal of Dembinski from his office, which had taken place at Tiszafüred in the beginning of March; nor on the battle-field at Kápolna; nor, finally, in the efforts—which had become generally known—of the Austrian Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz to induce me to desert the cause of Hungary. The fact to which I mainly owed the suspicion of the treacherous or at least self-interested efforts is older than all the just-enumerated occurrences. My first open opposition to Kossuth's policy, by means of the proclamation of Waizen, communicated in Chapter XV. of these notes, was that whereby I had challenged the hydra of calumny against me.

It was not unnatural that all who honored in Kossuth the founder of an independent state, Hungary *in spe*—above all, he himself—in consequence of this proclamation became my bitter enemies. And as, in spite of the power which they had over my person, they wanted the courage to take *open* revenge on me, they attempted to do so insidiously, by causing me to be suspected in the manner just indicated; wherein they were of course not in the least prevented by the postulate for intentionally rendering any one suspected—the disfiguring of the facts.

Thus at first it was *not denied* that I was in a certain degree accessible to the proposals of Field-marshal Prince Windischgrätz; then a version about the battle of Kápolna was fabricated—of course with Dembinski's personal co-operation—according to which I was said to have known how, on the first day of the battle, so to arrange for the second day as that an unfortunate issue was unavoidable. A not less successful version of Dembinski's retreat behind the Theiss, and his being removed from the chief command over the army, again pointed me out and my presumed intrigues as the principal cause of the circumstance, that the abilities of the old Pole as a general had remained untried, that he himself for the present could not become commander-in-chief of the army. Finally, my endeavor to conduct the war in such a manner as—in the opinion of the best officers of the army—was calculated to preserve unsullied the honorable character of the nation; the interruption of the spring campaign by the investment of Ofen; the subsequent pardon of the Ofen garrison; the refusal to take reprisals for those executed at Presburg; and, to crown all, the days of July at Komorn, with the certainly frightful demand

that the government should in their own persons become surety for the cause of the nation ;—all these facts were one after another worked up in the same manner as the battle of Kápolna and Dembinski's removal had been, and by degrees combined into a system of proofs which should leave not the least doubt that my aim was assuredly not the cause of the fatherland, but, on the contrary, either my own elevation to the dictatorship, or perhaps only an accumulation of merits in the eyes of the Austrian rulers.

In this "either . . . or" lay crowded together certainly much evident nonsense : nevertheless it had already found belief even among a part of those troops which were under my personal command. It is true this part of the army was not a compact one, and mostly consisted only of such individuals or separate bodies of troops as had happened at some time or other to be so unfortunate as to violate their duty on the battle-field immediately under my own eyes. The distrust of me, proclaimed undisguisedly, as ever, by this small part of the army, had certainly always produced with the greater part of it an effect diametrically opposite to the intended one. But the reason of this lay simply in the circumstance, that no single one of all the calumnies which had hitherto been directed against my person could be supported in the version given of it by any fact generally known to the army. And I was by no means unaware, that the first act on my part, the particulars of which might offer the slightest ground for a positive suspicion of the purity of my intentions, would immediately furnish the most gigantic aid to the mania for proselytizing among the parts of the army devoted to me. To keep secret the substance of the conference between the hostile trumpets and me *would have been* such an act, and would unquestionably have been accompanied by the result mentioned ; for the army was in a critical, nay most unfortunate situation—and misfortune disposes the mind to distrust.

Under these circumstances I could not possibly doubt whether it was less disadvantageous to conceal or to make known the summons addressed to me by the hostile trumpets. Nay, I had already rendered it absolutely impossible to conceal my conference with the Russian officers : for—convinced of the necessity of carefully avoiding all secret contact with hostile negotiators, if I did not wish wantonly to risk the confidence of the army—after the

trumpets had entered my room, I intentionally left the door wide open, that the subsequent conversation might take place in the presence of the *personnel* on duty assembled without selection in the adjoining room, and that consequently not the smallest matter could be discussed between me and the hostile officers without witnesses.

To communicate officially to the army the conditions under which—according to the terms of the Russian trumpets—we were immediately to lay down our arms was moreover not merely advisable, it was decidedly commanded by duty; because thereby any exaggeration in the rumors of the pretended advantages which Russia seemed to offer in return for our submission was rendered impossible, and consequently the demoralizing effect of the stipulated conditions, considering their evident worthlessness, was certainly reduced to a minimum.

It appeared to me far more difficult to decide *in what form and manner* the negotiations into which I had entered with the hostile trumpets should be communicated to the army; and I saw the necessity of advising about it with Count Leiningen and several of the highest and tried staff-officers of the army.

The question was, whether the judgment of the army about the expediency of laying down of our arms should be anticipated, or not, in the official publication of the hostile summons to this act; that is, whether the enemy's summons should be simply communicated to the army as a question already answered by a refusal, or laid before it as a still open question for a direct answer.

The result of the deliberation was a decision for the latter measure; because an opportunity seemed thereby to be afforded for obtaining certainty respecting the spirit of the first corps—which during the last few days had fallen into great disrepute—calculated either to tranquilize us, or to justify its dissolution. General Nagy-Sándor, by his dastardly conduct in the rear-guard service, but especially by his fatal abandonment of the position at Ráros in the night between the 18th and 19th of July, had already succeeded in rendering not only himself suspected of a disinclination for fighting, but likewise the first corps intrusted to his command; and this to such a degree, that there was felt to be no improbability in the assumption, that the first corps would be inclined to lay down its arms immediately, in spite of the wretched nature of the Russian counter-engagements.



The danger—in view of this assumption—of risking the existence of the army by laying before it this open question nevertheless did not exist; as a negative answer to the requirements of the Russian trumpets might be expected with certainty from the third and seventh army corps (Count Leiningen and Pöltenberg); and consequently the presupposed assent of the first corps alone must remain in a minority; and the only consequence it could have would be the sad but at the moment preservative necessity, immediately to dissolve this corps, which had shunned engaging the enemy, and incorporate its constituent parts in the other two army corps.

However, the fear to which the consequence of Nagy-Sándor's untrustworthiness had given rise was fortunately not justified by the answer of the first corps. Like those of the third and seventh, it was in the negative.

If I remember rightly, there existed between the declarations of the last two corps and that of the first merely the one difference, that only in those two, and not in this, the guarantee for the preservation of the constitution sanctioned in the year 1848 by King Ferdinand V. was pointed out as the postulate of a peaceable arrangement. But as the documents in question are not in my possession, I can not, on an indistinct recollection, vouch for the actual existence of this difference;—although it is hardly conceivable that an official declaration of the first corps, commanded by Nagy-Sándor (Kossuth's personal partisan), would contain a voluntary appeal to the state-law set aside by the law of independence of the 14th of April.

In the answers of the third and seventh corps, however—thus much I distinctly remember—this appeal was contained in express terms, as it was also in my declaration to Prince Paszkiewicz, which—composed in the spirit of these answers, and rejecting the requirement, made to us by the Russian trumpets, to lay down our arms—had been sent on the 22d of July from the head-quarters at Sajó-Szent-Péter by means of two trumpets to the camp of the next hostile column closely following us, to be forwarded to the commander-in-chief of the Russian army.

## CHAPTER LXX.

On the 21st of July the seventh corps reached Dubicsány and the passage across the Sajó, the third corps Putnok, and the first Rimaszécs, without the seventh having encountered, or the first been overtaken by the foe.

But on the same day it was reported by scouts at the headquarters in Putnok, that Miskolcz was in possession of the enemy.

On this intelligence, we resolved to advance to the attack on Miskolcz with the seventh and third corps, while the first corps should prevent the Russian column that was following from Losoncz from crossing the Sajó between Dubicsány and Vadna, and to this end should not follow the third and seventh corps further than the last-named point.

In the event of the attack on Miskolcz proving unsuccessful, a concentric flank-march to the left, by Szikszó and Medgyaszó toward Tokaj, as a last attempt to re-establish the communication with the southern forces of the country, was determined on; although, to make this manœuvre possible, with an enemy victorious in front and pursuing in the rear, it was prospectively necessary to expose, on the one hand, a part of the first corps at Vadna, and, on the other hand, a part of the seventh at Miskolcz.

(The diversion of our movements toward the north, perhaps to destroy the enemy's stores in Kaschau, and after that to strike through the Mármaros comitate to Transylvania—considering my firm resolution to execute, at whatever cost, if at all practicable, the decision of the Komorn military council of the 6th of July—was one of those operations which ought to have been dictated to me solely by the enemy himself—and this by the timely frustration of *all* attempts to gain the left bank of the Theiss by Tokaj).

Accordingly on the 22d of July the army crossed the Sajó between Dubicsány and Vadna, and advanced on the right bank of the river—the seventh corps by Sajó-Szent-Péter to within a mile of Miskolcz; the third corps, the head-quarters, and the army train (followed by the train of the fugitive civilians), as far as Sajó-Szent-Péter; the first corps to Vadna. The march was

flanked on the left bank of the Sajó by a secondary column of the seventh corps, disposing its most advanced troops to the left as far as Szikszó (on the Kaschau high road), to the right as far as the passage across the eastern branch of the Sajó at Sajó-Vámos; while the advanced troops of the main column reconnoitred the passage across the western branch of the river at Szirma-Besenyő, then a second one across the eastern branch at Arnót, and finally Miskolcz itself.

The result of these reconnoiterings—namely, the unexpected certainty *that Miskolcz and its environs had been vacated by the enemy on the 20th*, and the simultaneous report of the scouts *that Tokaj was held by Hungarian troops*—was, that Miskolcz, together with Mindszent and Csaba, and also Diós-Győr—the two first situated to the south, and the last to the west, of the Gyöngyös high road—were occupied in the course of the 22d of July by the main column of the seventh corps; and that the day after (the 23d) the following movement was executed by the army.

The seventh corps drew up its secondary column from the left bank of the Sajó, and advanced from Csaba southward—the main body as far as that point of the Gyöngyös high road where the carriage-road branches off from it to the left through Mályi to Nyék; the advanced troops, however, part as far as Nyék, part (on the said high road) near to Harsány.

The third corps, with the head-quarters, advanced from Sajó-Szent-Péter by Miskolcz; then striking into the Kaschau high road, crossed the Sajó at F.-Zsolcza, and thence down on the left bank of the river as far as A.-Zsolcza. The next service of the third corps was to take up a position on the Sajó from where it falls into the Hernád at Onod as far as Arnót (above F.-Zsolcza).

The first corps vacated Vadna, and followed behind as far as Sajó-Szent-Péter, where one-half of the corps remained as rear-guard, while the other half, forthwith crossing the Sajó, marched in an easterly direction to Szikszó, undertaking the observation of the Sajó from Arnót upward.

The army train, with the train of the fugitive civilians, was directed from the camp at Sajó-Szent-Péter to Onga, by way of Sajó-Keresztur, Szirma-Besenyő, and Arnót, and at the same time the construction of a bridge over the Hernád at Gesztely was undertaken. As soon as it was passable, the train of fugitive civilians, and also that part of the army train which could just



then be dispensed with, were ordered immediately again to continue their march to Tokaj from Onga, and further on by Gesztely as far as Szerencs.

The object of these movements was, consequently, the establishment of the army on the left bank of the Sajó in the line of Szikszó to Onod, and, at the same time, the protection of the march against hostile attacks from the south and north.

In the two preceding chapters I have communicated those conjectures respecting the enemy's plan of operations to which we were led by the supposition that he intended to make it impossible for us to get across the Theiss at Tokaj. These conjectures had, as is known, led us to apprehend opposition by the time we reached the Sajó between Dubicsány and Vadna, but at all events at Miskolcz. And now we found even Miskolcz undefended; while we learnt, moreover, that the enemy—*i. e.* a column of from 4000 to 5000 men, with some artillery—by the 20th of July had left the said point for the south; on which day our van-guard had reached only Rimaszombat. At the first glance it certainly appeared from all this that our conjectures on the enemy's plan of operations were wrong.

But as the apprehended counter-operation—namely, that from Waizen by Gyöngyös to Miskolcz—was indisputably the most ruinous to us, so, considering the accounts received relative to the strength of the Russian main army, we thought that our having escaped the effect of that counter-operation was more correctly explained by assuming that the enemy had really begun it, but in consequence of various delays had been short of time, than by presuming that he had chosen from the first a less advantageous plan of operations.

Any other plan of operations for the Russians than that of reaching Miskolcz from Waizen before us, seemed to be questionable from our idea of the number of the hostile troops alone. For the united strength of their forces which had entered Hungary by the Carpathians had never been estimated by any one—either by the government, or by paid or unpaid scouts—at above 70,000 men; and when we reached Miskolcz, it was even said that one-third of these had already been carried off by the cholera. Although the latter report bore the stamp of exaggeration, yet from circumstantial inquiries into the divers phases of the number of sick in the enemy's hospital, which had been removed a few

days before from Miskolcz to Kaschau, it was at least proved that the Russian main army—according to our reports of its whole strength—could now number scarcely more than 60,000 men.

But with this force, though still very considerable, and certainly twice that of our army, the Russian commander, after we had deprived him of the basis of his operation by gaining the line from Szikszó to Onod, found himself in a position which must determine him (as we thought) in the first place to a direct attack with his whole strength on our position on the Sajó.

It was a logical consequence of this view, that the not improbable position of the Russian main force (possibly not far from the passage of the Theiss between Poroszló and Tiszafüred), anew threatening our scarcely gained junction with the southern forces, gave us little concern. For as soon as the Russian commander saw the necessity of securing to himself, against all contingencies, success in his attack on our position on the Sajó, it was impossible that, if our estimate of his forces was correct, he could wish at the same time also to force the passage of the Theiss between Poroszló and Tiszafüred. But we were certain that this passage could be won only by force, because we were not only acquainted with the local position, which was very favorable for preventing the enemy from crossing the river at that point, but also because we had received certain intelligence that Tiszafüred and the still more southerly points for crossing the Theiss, as well as Tokaj, were occupied by Hungarian columns.

From our above-developed suppositions at that moment it must be evident to the reader how I arrived at the conclusion of permanently interrupting the further retreat to Tokaj on the Sajó, in case a resolute offensive movement on the part of the Russians against Miskolcz from the south should be placed out of doubt.

If this, contrary to our expectations, were not to happen, then I should have to suppose that the enemy was ignorant of our stopping on the Sajó, and that he preferred to gain the left bank of the Theiss at Tiszafüred by Poroszló, before we could reach it at Rakamaz by Tokaj; and in this case I was resolved to leave behind the first corps at Miskolcz, in order to secure this strategic point against that part of the enemy's army which was advancing upon us from Rimaszombat; with the third and seventh corps, however, to undertake a diversion from Miskolcz

toward the south—thus giving the Russians the choice, either to leave open to us a passage toward Szegedin on the right bank of the Theiss, or to desist from their operation by Poroszló against Tiszafüred, and first to force us back again toward Miskolcz, then over the Sajó, and directly toward Tokaj, on our original line for breaking through.

I certainly can not defend myself against the charge of having once more given opportunity for a dangerous combination; but so long as the Russian main army did not shrink from the operation against Tiszafüred, while we still remained on the Sajó, I must, after all, despair of regaining on the *left* bank of the Theiss a junction between the army under my command and the southern forces of the country; because the Russians from Tiszafüred—where they were much nearer to the point Debreczin than we who were on the Sajó—could easily have forced us to change the direction of our retreat from Miskolcz, by Tokaj, Debreczin, and Gross-Wardein, to the Banat. I had, in fact, no choice: I should in that case have had to undertake the diversion from Miskolcz toward the south, in order somehow to create on either bank of the Theiss new chances in favor of the intended breaking through toward the south.

Meanwhile the next events, under the constant influence of the illusion that the Russian main army was scarcely 60,000 strong, grouped themselves in such a manner that I came to the erroneous opinion (as I should think must be apparent, without any explanation of mine, from the subsequent operations of the army under my command), that the Russian commander had either never intended to operate beyond the Theiss, so long as we remained there, or that he had again given up this plan in consequence of the threatening advance of our seventh corps from Miskolcz toward the south.

It is now almost superfluous particularly to mention, that this advance, besides the covering of the march of our army on the left bank of the Sajó (on the line of Szikszó to Onod), had also the object of a forced reconnoitring. This was to furnish us with information whether Miskolcz or Tiszafüred was the *next* object of operation of the Russian main army.

By the 20th of July, as is known, the hostile garrison of Miskolcz had left this point, while our van-guard was still ten miles from it. Patrols of the seventh corps, however, informed us on



the 22d of July, that hostile outposts were stationed at Harsány (two miles to the south of Miskolcz, on the high road of Gyöngyös): they were evidently those of the garrison of Miskolcz. Now the circumstance that this weak column no longer felt it necessary to make way for us, at a distance of ten miles, led us to suppose that it had found a support. Whether this support was the main body of the principal Russian army, or merely a column to protect in flank the main body already operating against Tiszafüred—to find out this was the business of General Pöltenberg, he having been ordered to commence on the 23d of July the above-mentioned southern advance toward Nyék, and Harsány.

At the latter place, in the course of that day, his advanced troops were briskly attacked from Vatta, and pressed back along the high road as far as the eminence situated in the southwest of Görömböly. Here, however, the enemy encountered a part of the main troop of the seventh corps, which in the meantime had hastened forward from the camp at Görömböly, and now avoiding any further contest, he again retreated forthwith to Vatta. He seemed to have intended a mere reconnoitring. For the next day (the 24th of July), however, a serious attack on the position of the seventh corps was evidently in prospect.

General Pöltenberg received orders to await the enemy on the spot, unconditionally to accept battle, to give way only to a superior force, and in this case to draw back to the position of the third corps on the left bank of the Sajó.

For the protection of this retreat, should it happen, against the Russian corps approaching from Rimaszombat, one-half of the first corps remained in Sajó-Szent-Péter. Diós-Györ likewise continued to be occupied by a column of the seventh corps; as in general the position which our army had taken up on the 23d of July was left unchanged for the following day.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

In the night from the 23d to the 24th of July, a lady travelling in a carriage was stopped at our outposts, and on her asserting that she had a letter for me, she was conducted to the head-quarters at A.-Zsolcza.

The contents of this sealed letter, addressed to me personally, were as follow :

" BALASSA-GYARMAT, *le 19 Juillet, 1849.*

" MONSIEUR—Les troupes placés sous mes ordres se sont trouvées en présence de celles que vous commandez ; la fortune des armes s'est prononcée en ma faveur. En vous suivant, j'appris partout sur mon passage, que vous ne vous refusez point de rendre, avec une parfaite loyauté, pleine et entière justice à la valeur de mon corps d'armée. Ce procédé de franchise de votre part m'impose le devoir de vous donner une preuve de l'estime que m'inspire votre caractère de brave militaire ; et c'est à cette fin que je me suis décidé à vous adresser la présente communication. Vos talens ont sans doute su faire surmonter de graves difficultés à votre corps d'armée ; mais vous ne vous dissimulerez point, qu'en ce moment un danger imminent le menace. Je viens donc vous offrir, Monsieur, en toute confiance, la voie des négociations. Veuillez m'indiquer les conditions auxquelles vous jugeriez possible de faire cesser une lutte désormais inégal pour vous, et je m'empresserai de solliciter à cet égard les ordres de S. A. M. le Commandant en chef de l'armée impériale russe. Je n'ai pas besoin d'ajouter, qu'elles seront posées avec toute la justice qui distingue mon illustre chef, et que votre honneur de brave guerrier ne subira la moindre atteinte.

" Recevez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

(Signed)

" LE COMTE RUDIGER,

Commandant en chef d'un corps d'armée de troupes russes."

As near as I can remember, I answered Count Rüdiger to the following effect :

That if the safety of my troops and of my own person was alone concerned, I should by no means be disinclined, on honorable conditions, to hold out the hand of peace.

That, however, the salvation of Hungary was concerned, the political existence of which the Emperor of Austria and those about him intended to destroy ; to which destruction his Majesty the Emperor of Russia—apparently misinformed of what the

better and greater part of Hungary wished and still wishes—had also of late unfortunately given his powerful support.

That therefore we must fight until our peaceful fellow-citizens were saved from the danger of subjugation, or we ourselves were destroyed in the unequal contest.

That this was my answer as a soldier and as the commander of the troops intrusted to me by the state.

That I hoped every leader of Hungarian troops thought as I did in this respect ; in which case it would be difficult to pacify Hungary by partial treaties with individual leaders of the army.

But that I should consider it to be my duty to open and smooth the way for the commencement of secret negotiations between the provisional government of Hungary and the Russian Field-marshal Prince Paszkiewicz, if the latter would be pleased to let me know on what conditions Hungary could make peace with his majesty the Emperor of Russia ; and that in this case I thought I could show a result more desirable for Russia than even the completely successful subjugation of Hungary could present.

I communicated to Count Leiningen, as well as to the chief of the general staff, and several superior officers of the army who were accidentally present at the head-quarters, this reply to Count Rüdiger, the whole substance of which has been related above ; and afterwards delivered it, sealed and addressed to the above-named commander of the Russian corps, to the same lady through whom I had received his letter.

She thereupon left the head-quarters at A.-Zsolcza late in the afternoon of the 24th of July. I had advised her to return to the Russian camp by way of Szikszó and the position of our first corps, because the way by Miskolecz, which she at first wished to take, was occupied—as we shall see in the next chapter—by the seventh corps, at that time already in retreat on the left bank of the Sajó. She followed my advice ; but not reaching Szikszó before night was setting in, she resolved to stay there till daybreak, and addressed herself directly to General Nagy-Sándor, with the request that she might be accommodated with suitable quarters for the night, at the same time informing him of the object of her journey.

Nagy-Sándor immediately suspected some treachery in my correspondence with the commander of the Russian corps ; communicated this suspicion to several of his staff-officers, and was



strengthened by them in his intention of becoming acquainted with the contents of my letter to the Russian commander. But he had not the courage to do this openly. General Nagy-Sándor thought it more advisable secretly to purloin the sealed letter, and after it had been opened, read, and re-sealed, to restore it in the same way to the possession of the unsuspecting lady. But before she set out again on her journey from Szikszó, she accidentally noticed that the impression of the seal on the envelope was no longer the same as when she received it from me, and communicated this discovery just as casually to a staff-officer of the first army corps, who not being of the same political opinions as Nagy-Sándor, and, as a matter of course, not informed of what had happened to the letter, learned from his companions how the seal had been changed, and brought me the information of the affair, with the well meant intention of putting me on my guard against Nagy-Sándor. But I ignored the whole transaction; for otherwise I should have had to punish General Nagy-Sándor for an act by which he had undoubtedly succeeded, though unintentionally, in restoring among those officers whom he had himself made suspicious of me their original confidence in my purposes and actions.

On the 24th of July, the trumpets that had been sent from Sajó-Szent-Péter to the camp of the Russian Colonel Chrulow with my answer to the summons to lay down our arms returned from their mission. They had found his column already joined by a second under General Sass; and in both camps met with a reception suitable to their office. For the Russian leaders observed toward our trumpets those usages of international law which, as history tells us, are never infringed with impunity, even under the pretext that the enemy is a rebel.

I must here add, that Captain Katlarow and Count Rüdiger, when present as trumpets in our camp, had no hesitation in exchanging arms with two officers of my suite. General Sass and Colonel Chrulow, assuming that I had made this exchange with Captain Katlarow and Count Rüdiger, took the opportunity of delivering their pistols to our trumpets as a counter-present for me. I, however, could not overlook the motive of this chivalric attention, and therefore repaid it by sending, on one of the following days, into the nearest Russian camp, two pairs of my own pistols directed respectively to General Sass and Colonel Chrulow.

## CHAPTER LXXII

GENERAL PÖLTENBERG with the seventh corps, as has been mentioned in Chapter LXX., had immediately repelled the Russian corps which, on the 23d of July, had advanced aggressively from Vatta along the high road of Gyöngyös as far as the eminence of Görömböly, and had hereupon received orders to maintain his position during the following day likewise.

In the forenoon of the 24th of July, however, such trustworthy information arrived at our head-quarters relative to the strength of the Russian forces directly opposed to our seventh corps, that I thought I might now consider it certain that the next object of the operation of the Russian main army was Miskolcz (not Tiszafüred). I therefore deemed it superfluous to expose our seventh corps any longer to the danger of an attack by a superior force, and ordered it without delay to retreat by Miskolcz to the left bank of the Sajó.

But on the part of the Russians, and from the same direction as on the 23d (namely from Vatta), a resolute attack on the position of General Pöltenberg at Görömböly had already been made, before this order to retreat could reach him.

General Pöltenberg, after a hot contest of several hours' duration, which he had courageously sustained against the hostile superior force, on the eminence to the southwest of Görömböly, was forced to retreat by the emerging of a strong hostile turning-column on his left (at Mályi). He effected this, still fighting, along the high road as far as Miskolcz, and—after he had here been rejoined by the column detached to Diós-Györ—on the Kaschau high road as far as F.-Zsolcza on the left bank of the Sajó.

When General Pöltenberg arrived here, as darkness was setting in, he received instructions, with the seventh corps, to occupy the line of the Sajó from A.-Zsolcza down the river as far as Onod in the course of the night; while Count Leiningen concentrated the third corps between A.-Zsolcza and Arnót.

That half of the first corps which had been left behind in

Sajó-Szent-Péter on the 23d of July as rear-guard of the army, but on the 24th to protect the line of retreat of the seventh corps, was now likewise disposed on the left bank of the Sajó for the purpose of rejoining the other half of the corps posted at Szikszó ; where General Nagy-Sándor had for the present to remain with the whole first-corps, to ward off an attack, which might possibly be directed from Putnok, against the right flank of the army, and to secure, as before, the Sajó line above Arnót as far as Sajó-Vámos.

The head-quarters advanced at nightfall of the 24th to Onga, and in the morning of the 25th to Gesztely.

The enemy had pursued our seventh corps in the evening of the 24th only as far as Miskolcz. In the forenoon of the 25th, however, he advanced from Miskolcz to the Sajó, and obstinately attacked the position of the third and seventh corps, confining himself almost exclusively to the active employment of his numerous artillery. But along the carriage-road from Sajó-Keresztur to Arnót (on the right wing of the third corps) he essayed a brisk attack with cavalry. It failed, however ; as did also the efforts, though extraordinary, made by the artillery to dislodge the batteries of our centre. One of the hostile batteries especially distinguished itself by the rare boldness with which, rushing forward close to the river-bank (opposite A.-Zsoleza), it gained a position protected against the fire of our batteries, and moreover from which the line of the latter was taken in flank. From this point the enemy's battery was very destructive to our left centre, and its removal appeared ultimately imperative at any cost. Lieut.-Colonel Gózon, of the seventh corps, undertook this critical task. With about fifty volunteers of his battalion he waded across the Sajó, pushed undetected his way through the wood at the opposite river-bank, and suddenly fell upon the two battalions camping on the western edge of this forest, as a protection to the battery posted not far off. The stroke succeeded so completely that both hostile battalions blindly took to flight. The battery made all haste to overtake its guard ; and thus the balance of the combat was immediately restored in the range of our left centre, and continued so during the remainder of the engagement.

This balance the brave General Pöltenberg and Count Leinigen knew how to secure for themselves on all points of their disproportionately extended position by a circumspect and timely



employment of their forces; and several hours before nightfall the attacks of the enemy were completely crippled.

Both army corps, the seventh and third, had firmly maintained the line on the Sajó. The enemy nevertheless could arrive unobstructed in the rear of our position by means of crossing the Hernád during the night, below the point of its junction with the Sajó.

We might thereby be forced to enter on the further retreat behind the Theiss, and that under the most unfavorable circumstances. Nay, supposing the enemy intended to execute this turning-manceuvre with adequate forces and speed, we had cause to apprehend even the total loss of our line of retreat toward Tokaj, and consequently the reward of all those inexpressible efforts which the army had made since the evacuation of Waizen.

From this apprehension originated the determination to draw back the army from the Sajó to the left bank of the Hernád before daybreak next morning (26th of July).

The order of succession of the army corps remained unchanged in their new disposition on the Hernád. In its centre the third corps was disposed at Gesztely and Kák; on the right wing, from Csanálos to Baksa, the first; and on the left wing, from Hernád-Nemeti to Köröm, the seventh corps. Patrols of the latter observed the further course of the Hernád till it falls into the Thieiss. The head-quarters went to Szerencs. The unnecessary army train as well as the fugitive civilians were ordered back by Tokaj to the left bank of the Theiss. On our retreat from Waizen to Miskolcz several officers had deserted from the army. Some of these gentry had meanwhile been apprehended at Szerencs. I judged it needful in our circumstances to sentence those unfortunates to death.

The enemy justified only in part our supposition that he had intended to turn our position on the Sajó from Onod by Köröm, and to force us out of the line of retreat toward Tokaj. He attempted in fact to pass the river between Onod and Köröm, but not till the 26th of July, consequently too late to effect this object, and moreover with so little energy that the feeble column of the seventh corps, forming the left wing at Köröm, succeeded by itself in maintaining the left bank of the Hernád at that point.

This attempt to cross the river was the only undertaking of the enemy, during the course of the 26th of July, that we heard

of. All the reports of our patrols, as well as the information of the scouts, agreed that the hostile army was neither advancing nor retrograding from Miskolcz. Consequently it appeared as if the arrival of General Grabbe from the mountain-towns was waited for, before the energetic continuation of the offensive operations against us. And since we remained so much the more under the influence of the erroneous assumption, that on the previous day, on the Sajó, the main body of the Russian principal army had been opposed to us—as no report causing apprehension had arrived from Tiszafüred—I resolved to stay on the Hernád until I should be forced to continue the retreat behind the Theiss either by a superior direct attack on our position, or by a southerly side-movement of the supposed main body of the Russian principal army.

To this conclusion I was brought, on the one hand, by the intention of facilitating the retreat of the Kazinczy division to the Banat, which, in contradiction to Dembinski's well-known plan of concentration, still continued inactive in the Mármaros; on the other hand, by the conviction that—considering the present strategic state of affairs in the south of the country, as well as the impossibility of shaking off the Russian main army—I should be able to secure the existing chances for a favorable turn of affairs on the lower Theiss and in Transylvania only by means of delaying my further retreat all I could, not by hastening it.

The strategic state of affairs in the southern theatre of war, according to the last information of the government and some private communications, was as follows:

The Ban Baron Jellachich, in consequence of a defeat sustained in the middle of July at Hegyes, had evacuated the Bácska with his army, and confined himself, on the left bank of the Danube and the right of the Theiss, to exclusively maintaining the plateau of Titel. The defile of Perlasz—by taking advantage of which, the defeated Ban, in order to redress himself in some degree, might have attempted a diversion from Titel to the right bank of the Theiss—was in our hands; the fortress of Peterwardein in part relieved. The retreat of the Ban was followed by the attempt, on our part, to conquer the plateau of Titel, and completely relieve Peterwardein. These undertakings, however, had to be abandoned when scarcely begun; for the southward advance of the Austrian main army from Pesth toward Szegedin

induced the provincial government to order back to Szegedin the greater part of the very forces which had been destined for these enterprises, where, united with the corps of reserve and that of General Vysocki under the chief command of Dembinski-Mészáros (formerly Mészáros-Dembinski),\* they were to co-operate in the offensive intended, as was said, against the Austrian main army.

With regard to Transylvania—from the general intimations, partly official, partly private, which I had received relative to the state of affairs there—this at least was to be considered as certain, that Field-marshal Lieut. Bem did not yet despair of maintaining the territory, although half of it was already lost.

Consequently, on the one hand Transylvania, on the other the line of the central and lower Theiss, were certainly not yet given up, though no doubt seriously menaced; and moreover the fortress of Temesvár—in the centre of the territory to be defended simultaneously both east and west—was still in the enemy's possession: this was, synoptically, the strategic position in the south of Hungary, as deducible from the news communicated to me up to the 26th of July.

A change in this undeniably precarious condition, favorable in some way or other, must now begin, in my opinion, with the fall of Temesvár, so as to render possible especially the reinforcement of the mobile army on the lower Theiss. For from the circumstance, that though the Ban Baron Jellachich had been defeated and forced to evacuate the Bácska, yet that it had nevertheless not been put out of his power to reappear at any moment in an offensive attitude on the right bank of the lower Theiss—a considerable part of that army, being indispensable for the eventual protection of Szegedin and of the lower Theiss (against the Ban in the south), must be withheld from the northern offensive to be opened from Szegedin against Baron Haynau, and the success of this offensive must consequently beforehand appear doubtful on account of the insufficiency of the forces disposable for the purpose. It is true that the news from Szegedin represented the parts of the mobile army on the lower Theiss, destined for this offensive, as a total force of 50,000 men. According to my

\* When this change in the chief command properly took place, I can not indicate with certainty. I merely infer, from other vivid recollections, that it must have belonged to the last days of July.



calculation, however, there were to be found among the pretended 50,000 men scarcely 30,000 organized troops, including the corps of reserve, which was not yet in all its parts completely equipped for action. The remaining 20,000 men might perhaps have been "militia" (respecting the practical value of which in war-operations, see Chapter III.); if they did not even owe their harmless existence to an official *error calculi*.

From an offensive undertaken with 30,000 men against the Austrian main army reinforced by a Russian corps, not much, indeed, could be expected. But as soon as Temesvár had fallen, this army of about 30,000 men could certainly be raised to nearly 60,000, by means of drawing on our besieging corps (General Count Vécsey) and the recruits lately levied, and to be equipped with the arms taken at Temesvár. It must now, I should think, be sufficiently plain why I saw in the fall of that fortress the nearest postulate for assuming that a favorable turn in the strategic state of affairs in the south of Hungary was to be anticipated.

But then to render possible the taking of Temesvár, the further maintenance of the central and lower Theiss and of Transylvania, at least of its southwestern part, was indispensable: finally, the accomplishment of this task demanded *that the Russian main army should be kept as far distant as possible from the line of the Maros*; for in the same degree as it approached the Maros, Transylvania and the line of the Theiss must become less tenable, for the simple reason, that the Russian main army would gain with the Maros simultaneously the possibility of attacking our army in Transylvania, as well as that at Szegedin, directly in their rear.

My determination to remain at the Hernád was consequently justified not only by the necessity of resting the army, extremely exhausted in consequence of the forced retreat; not only by the intention—far from being of little importance in those days of general scarcity of men—of gaining for the combat the Kazinczy division, about 7000 strong, which was stationed inactive in the Mármaros. This determination to maintain the position on the Hernád as long as possible had, as I have above explained, a *strategic motive*; and I should have resolved upon it under the same conjunctures, even if the retreat from Waizen had not exhausted the physical powers of the army, and if the opportunity

had not offered itself to augment the really active forces of the country by those 7000 men of the Kazinczy division.

Whether the motive of my determination to interrupt the retreat to the Banat, in the position on the Hernád, was strategically correct, is certainly a question which can not now be unqualifiedly answered in the affirmative. This motive rested on the assumption of the twofold possibility offered by our position on the Hernád, according to circumstances, either to oppose during a certain time the attack made with all its force by the Russian main army on our front, or to frustrate the alteration in our retreat (namely by continuing it betimes), intended perhaps by means of a critical flanking manœuvre from Miskolcz by Tiszafüred toward Debreczin. The assumption of this twofold possibility, however, was based on the well-known supposition that the Russian main army numbered scarcely 60,000 men, consequently that that part of the army which encamped on the 26th of July at Miskolcz was its main body.

Now admitting that this supposition was correct, and at the same time bearing in mind the strategic position above indicated—so far as it was known to me on the 26th of July—of all the armies operating in Hungary, there can be objected against my determination to remain on the Hernád scarcely any thing of importance.

This very supposition, however (how it originated has already been explained), was totally erroneous: for the whole number of the forces at the disposal of the Russian general against the three army corps united under my command amounted to 120,000 men; and consequently on the 26th of July we had by no means the main body, but only about a third of this force opposed to the front of our position on the Hernád, while the main body with its advanced troops had reached on the same day Tiszafüred on our left, and was therefore above six miles nearer to Debreczin than we were. The distance from Tiszafüred to Debreczin is nine miles; while our army, in its position on the Hernád, was somewhere about sixteen miles from Debreczin.

Under these circumstances my staying on the Hernád was certainly a strategic folly—but an unanticipated one; an aimless endangering of the last possibility of re-establishing a junction with the southern forces by an uninterrupted speedy continuation of the retreat—but an unconscious one.

I have already superficially indicated above how it happened that I could stay on the Hernád in spite of the occupation of Tiszafüred by about 20,000 Russians, which had taken place on the 26th of July; on that day, namely, I was not informed of the hostile advance against Tiszafüred. How it happened, however, that even on the morning of the 27th no report had arrived at the head-quarters in Szerencs about the forcing of the left bank of the Theiss at Tiszafüred, though it had been begun on the 25th—to explain this I must leave to the unhappy commander of that column, whose mission it had been to occupy Poroszló, to observe the enemy on the right bank of the Theiss, and to defend the passage from Poroszló to Tiszafüred.

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### CHAPTER LXXIII.

I HAD not omitted to send to the government in Szegedin a circumstantial report relative to the exchange of trumpets which had taken place between the Russian army and that under my command.

It is known that this answer to the commander-in-chief of the Russian army of intervention contained an appeal to the constitutional law for Hungary sanctioned in the spring of 1848 by King Ferdinand V.

This appeal—apart from its accordance with the leading reason of my personal participation in the war against Austria—*was dictated by the army.*

Nevertheless Kossuth blamed this appeal as a demonstration, originating from me alone, against himself and his work, the declaration of independence of the 14th of April.

I put up with this blame, however, without answering it, because I did not wish still further to widen the breach between me and Kossuth, but, on the contrary, aimed at rendering him as much as possible accessible to those counsels which I had partly already given, partly intended to give him, as most nearly affecting the interests of the nation, and as being all that, under the then existing circumstances, could, according to my conviction, still be realized.



My perception of what was still attainable by the nation—its near abolition as a state being inevitable—and which moreover was indispensable to the nation to give it a high moral bearing in the face of its comfortless future, and consequently of which it had need above all—this perception remained the same as it had been when my proposal was made in the ministerial council of the 26th of June (at Pesth), as well as my resolution to remain with the main army at Komorn; that Austria, even under the wings of Russia, should once more feel the sharpness of Hungarian arms!

Under what conditions the probability presented itself to me of seeing this moral want of the nation still satisfied; how I had unfortunately to perceive that I should have to perform, in the most favorable case, only an indirect part in the satisfaction of this national want, since, being directly opposed to the Russian and not to the Austrian army, to take a direct part in the offensive operation against the latter, I should have been obliged to expose to the former the basis of the operation (the Banat), but that then the intended offensive counter-stroke against the Austrians could be only a transient, not a lasting one; all these circumstances I have already mentioned in the preceding chapter.

It remains only to remark, that I thought an indirect support of the offensive preparing at Szegedin against the army of Baron Haynau likewise possible from the garrison of Komorn, and that I was thereby induced—after my determination to maintain the position on the Hernád had been taken—to send a letter to General Klapka, informing him of the breaking-through of my army, presumptively already successful, and stimulating him to activity. But as this letter had to traverse a part of the country occupied by the enemy, it seemed to me necessary to take the precaution of confining it in its weightiest part to the most general indications; the more so, as General Klapka's proved sagacity led me to anticipate a right comprehension of my hints, however general might be the terms in which they were expressed.

Klapka's energetic demeanor on the line of communication between the Austrian main army and its basis of operations; the fall of Temesvár; the further maintenance of the southwestern part of Transylvania by Field-marshal Lieut. Bem; and the continued hampering of the Russian main army on the upper Theiss by the forces united under my command;—these were circum-

stances, with the timely coincidence of which there might be expected—even without extravagance—from an offensive against the army of Baron Haynau, though not the preservation of the existence of Hungary as a state, nevertheless the satisfying of the above-explained moral want of the nation;—if Kossuth, at last discovering Dembinski's incapacity, should intrust to more skillful hands the guidance of this offensive, and at the same time conquer his own morbid inclination to exert a direct influence on the progress of the war-operations.

To induce Kossuth to do the first, and not to leave undone the second, was the object of those counsels which I now wished to gain him to reflect upon. My hope of success, however, was but faint; for I did not conceal from myself that Kossuth's hostile feelings toward me, in consequence of the well-known events at Komorn, had probably become sufficiently strong to decide him to do just the contrary of what I advised; without taking into account the peculiar circumstance, that I could not advise for Dembinski's removal from the chief command without exciting in Kossuth the suspicion that I did so probably not from a well-founded conviction of Dembinski's incapacity as a general, but merely with the intention of rendering possible the reacquisition of the staff of command for myself, and consequently of a power in the state by means of which, on occasion, even the authority of the civil government might be called in question.

Nevertheless I advised Kossuth to remove Dembinski from the chief command; for I felt an inward impulse not to leave untried any means for the promotion of what I conceived to be the moral welfare of the nation. The injurious effects of Kossuth's direct encroachments on the conduct of the war-operations I passed over for the present, however, in cautious silence, partly that I might not hurt his personal vanity, and thereby lose all; partly because it seemed to me as if these encroachments—so long as Dembinski was still at the head of the war-operations on the lower Theiss—were really harmless, or at least, as regarded the success of our arms there, scarcely more injurious than Dembinski's own strategic dispositions.

Hereupon I received from Kossuth a private letter, in which he declared, among other things, that unfortunately he could not deny Dembinski's incapacity as a general; and that he believed the best way to get rid of him would be, if he himself joined the

army, and personally conducted the operations according to my counsels.

I received besides an official invitation to be present, on the 27th or 28th of July, at a personal conference with Kossuth and the then war-minister General Aulich—I do not now exactly remember whether in Kardszag or Kis-Ujszállás.

Of course I could not understand whence Kossuth had all at once acquired the unbounded confidence in me which was displayed in his declaration that he was willing to conduct the operations according to *my* counsels; the sincerity of this declaration also, in view of the Komorn events, as well as the genuineness of the feelings with the outpouring of which he regaled me in the private letter, was highly doubtful; and I resolved not to honor it with any reply.

The official invitation to a personal meeting with Kossuth and the war-minister, on the contrary, was the more wished for by me, as I thought that Kossuth, in the presence of a witness such as General Aulich, would probably hesitate to promise more than he intended to perform.

On the morning of the 27th of July I accordingly left the head-quarters at Szerencs, to hasten, by Tokaj, Nyiregyháza, and Debreczin, to the place of meeting.

In Nyiregyháza, however, I found a written report from the commander of the Tiszafüred column on its way, to the effect that the day before, a Russian corps had crossed the Theiss between Poroszló and Tiszafüred; and this news obliged me to forego the meeting with Kossuth, and return immediately to my head-quarters at Szerencs.

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## CHAPTER LXXIV.

WHEN, on the morning of the 27th of July, I left the head-quarters at Szerencs, to repair to the place of the proposed meeting with Kossuth, no change whatever had been remarked by our patrols and scouts in the position of the hostile corps (the presumed main body of the Russian corps d'armée), which had



remained inactive during the preceding day at Miskolcz. At that time there had likewise been no report received at the head-quarters—as I have distinctly stated in Chapter LXXII.—of the enemy having forced the left bank of the Theiss at Tisza-füred.

I had accordingly indulged the hope of being able to leave the army for forty-eight hours (this space of time I fixed for the meeting with Kossuth, including the journey there and back), without being particularly apprehensive that any hostile undertaking could essentially prejudice our strategic position on the Hernád; for it is known that we explained the remaining inactive at Miskolcz of the presumed main body of the Russian army by the apparently not improbable intention of the hostile commander to await, before the next significant undertaking against us, the arrival of his army corps under Grabbe, which was hastening thither from the mountain-towns.

This repetition, though wearisome, of circumstances sufficiently known from what precedes; as well as once more mentioning that we estimated the whole Russian main army at no more than 60,000 men; together with the supplementary remark, that we were informed of its real force (about 120,000 men) only *post festa*, that is when we were Russian prisoners,—may serve here as a natural explanation of the fact, that though the news I had received on the 27th of July in Nyiregyháza, about the enemy having effected his passage across the Theiss between Poroszló and Tisza-füred, certainly disagreeably surprised me, it by no means caused me to despair of the possibility of our further retreat to the line of the Berettyó (the point on the left bank of the Theiss where we next intended to halt), but merely showed me the necessity of instantly beginning the retreat, and so foregoing the reinforcement of the army by the Kazinczy division. I did not despair of the possibility of executing the retreat, because I erroneously conceived that the main body of the hostile army was posted at Miskolcz, and that the part of it which had crossed the Theiss at Tisza-füred could consequently scarcely be strong enough to succeed in preventing us from marching through the plain of the Theiss to the river Berettyó; but I thought it necessary to begin the retreat immediately, because with the left bank of the Theiss at Tisza-füred we should have lost the possibility of hindering or even controlling the accumulation of

the enemy's troops on this strategic point ; so that by our longer remaining on the Hernád an opportunity would have been afforded to the Russian commander to establish himself suddenly with superior forces on our ground of retreat, and to press us back either to Transylvania laterally, or even into the Mármaros, thereby to all appearance for ever separating us from the southern armies of the country.

The complete evacuation of our position on the Hernád, moreover, could not be deferred, as in the course of the 28th of July several mutually confirmatory reports arrived at the headquarters at Szerencs from the valley of the upper Hernád, placing beyond doubt the southern advance, rumored the day before (from Kaschau toward Tokaj), of a fresh Russian corps (Baron Sacken), which had shortly before broken into Hungary. By this corps, in the moment of its arrival on the left bank of the Hernád at Hidas-Németi, the position of our army appeared to be strategically turned in its right flank ; Tokaj, with the only prepared passage to the left bank of the Theiss available to us, to be next menaced ; and already, merely to secure our retreat to the latter, we were obliged to draw back from the position on the Hernád as far as the point of junction of the roads between Zombor and Bodrog-Keresztur, Mád and Tarczal. But apart from the tactic unfavorableness of the local circumstances, remaining longer at *this* point could not have been strategically justified, if the left bank of the Theiss at Tiszafüred had still been in our power. For with the emerging of a fresh Russian corps between Kaschau and our army, the longer keeping back of the latter completely lost that significance, which—as we, under-estimating the enemy's strength, might hope—was to render him apprehensive of the basis of his operations, prevent him from turning our left by Tiszafüred, and cause him to undertake a direct attack on our positions on the right bank of the Theiss ; in which case I certainly should not have considered it impossible to prevent the further southern advance of the Russian main army on the upper Theiss for some time.

On the 27th of July, during my absence from the army, an advance of hostile cavalry from Miskolcz by Onga took place against the position of our third corps at Gesztely and Kák. This undertaking, however, soon proved to be a mere reconnoitring ; as the hostile divisions, however, quickly and daringly they

attacked our outposts, nevertheless decidedly avoided any serious conflict, and finally evacuated even Onga.

The day after, the third corps was very violently attacked in its position by a Russian corps of strength equal to itself, which had approached likewise from Miskolcz by Onga against Gesztely.

Count Leiningen confined himself, indeed, to the defensive; but it was a defensive which obliged the enemy to evacuate the field of battle after a contest of several hours, leaving behind his wounded men.

This time it seemed as if the enemy's attack on our position had been meant in real earnest. The choice of the point of attack also seemed to indicate this; for it can not be denied that, with the left bank of the Hernád at Gesztely and Kák, a great part of our army, namely the left wing, would also have been lost, as soon as the enemy energetically pursued his victory. In evident contradiction, however, to the earnestness of the enemy's intention—which, on account of the vehemence of the attack, could not be mistaken—to break through the centre of our line on the Hernád, stood the numerical strength of the assailant, which was altogether insufficient to overcome the notorious difficulties of such undertakings.

And this striking disproportion between the means and the apparent object of this attack on the 28th of July was a circumstance, the only possible plausible explanation of which filled us suddenly with a lively apprehension that we had perhaps *already* let slip the favorable moment for the continuation of our retreat from the Hernád across the Theiss to the river Berettyó, and should now scarcely be able to reach it, or at all events only with extreme efforts.

That the enemy had *blindly rushed upon* us on the 28th of July at Gesztely, we could not accept as an explanation of his vehement onset; because he had already reconnoitred on the previous day this very point, had found it strongly occupied by us, and our troops there quite the reverse of disinclined to fight; and consequently, the energetic opposition which he had met with on the 25th of July on the Sajó being fresh in his mind, he could by no means be authorized to expect a less energetic resistance on the Hernád.

It seemed to us far more reasonable to explain the attack of the 28th of July on the centre of our position on the Hernád, by



assuming that the Russian commander—knowing the basis of his operations to be secured in future by the corps of Baron Sacken, which had lately broken into Hungary—had begun during the 27th of July to put his (presumed) main body in march from Miskolcz to Tiszafüred; and that the attacks on Gesztely on the 27th and 28th had merely been demonstrations, in order to mask this flank manœuvre.

According to this, the (presumed) main body of the Russian army, which on the 26th was still encamped at Miskolcz, on the 28th could certainly have crossed the Theiss between Poroszló and Tiszafüred, and have executed the strategic turning of the left flank of our army, which, awaiting the direct attack, was still on the Hernád from Baksa to Köröm. There was consequently no longer any hope of passing Debreczin without danger. It was necessary to choose a line of retreat to the river Berettyó deviating in an eastern direction from the route by Debreczin, and moreover to strive to make up for the time lost on the Hernád, if possible, by means of forced marches. In consequence of the energetic vigor with which Count Leiningen had repelled the last attack on Gesztely, the retreat of our army seemed fortunately to be secured against any pursuit at least from the Hernád by Tokaj to the left bank of the Theiss.

Accordingly, at nightfall of the 28th of July the army left its position on the Hernád, and reached Vaskapu (on the left bank of the Theiss, on the road from Tokaj to Nyiregyháza) in the course of the 29th, and Nyiregyháza itself on the 30th.

Meanwhile we were informed that the enemy had not proceeded from Tiszafüred toward Debreczin, but up the Theiss; intending, as it seemed, to render impossible our further retreat, if we remained any longer on the Hernád, by straightway occupying the left bank of the Theiss opposite Tokaj.

We could learn nothing positive about an advance of the enemy toward Debreczin till our arrival at Nyiregyháza, nor even during our short stay there. The probability of this movement was, however, too great for us to assume with certainty that it would be possible to effect without danger our further retreat on the route by Debreczin.

The main body of our army, consisting of the third and seventh corps, was consequently at Nyiregyháza turned eastward from the way to Debreczin on the road by Nagy-Kálló, Nyir-

Adony, Vámos-Pércs, Nagy-Léta to Kis-Marja (on the left bank of the Berettyó); while General Nagy-Sándor with the first corps, which had not once been engaged with the enemy since Waizen (15th of July), had to form the flank-guard of the army, and for this purpose continue his march on the route by Debreczin, and further by Derecske and Berettyó-Ujfalu to the left bank of the Berettyó; but arrived there, immediately to undertake the occupation of the latter *à cheval* of the road to Gross-Wardein.

In order to render the combined movements of the main body and the flank-guard compatible with the twofold consideration of gaining betimes the river Berettyó, and preserving the army from heavy losses, the following dispositions for the march were issued :

July 31st,	the main body to	Nagy-Kálló,	the flank-guard to	Hadház.
Aug. 1st,	" "	Nyir-Adony,	" "	Debreczin.
2d,	" "	Vámos-Pércs,	" "	remain at Debreczin.
3d,	" "	Nagy-Léta,	" "	to Derecske.
4th,	" "	Kis-Marja,	" "	Berettyó-Ujfalu.

The leader of the flank-guard (General Nagy-Sándor) was expressly ordered to avoid any serious engagement with a superior hostile force : in case he should encounter such force before reaching Debreczin, by a lateral retreat to the main body of the army; in the contrary case—that is, if his corps should be attacked by a superior force after having reached Debreczin—by speedily continuing the route of march indicated to him as far as Berettyó-Ujfalu.

According to this disposition, the main body of the army on the 31st of July and 1st of August—so long, namely, as there was still a possibility of a hostile movement *before* Debreczin—could not remain at an equal height with the flank-guard; it must, on the contrary (compare the corresponding stations for the 31st of July and 1st of August) give to the flank-guard so much advance as was absolutely necessary to prevent its retreat to the main body of the army from degenerating into a flank-march; because otherwise the flank-guard—supposing that a superior enemy advanced against it from Debreczin toward Hadház, or was awaiting it before Debreczin—would have had to choose between either allowing itself to be destroyed or separated from the main body.

In case General Nagy-Sándor should find Debreczin either

not yet occupied at all by the enemy, or already vacated by a feeble column which had perhaps been separately advanced (both cases were conceivable, if the hostile main forces had really marched from Tiszafüred up the Theiss); then he had to aim principally at procuring, by means of patrols advancing far on all communications leading from Debreczin toward the Theiss, the most exact information possible relative to the movements of the enemy. Whether the flank-guard should remain during the 1st of August in Debreczin, or might rest there—according to the dispositions for the march projected in advance—even on the 2d of August—to judge of this I must leave to General Nagy-Sándor's discernment. The express order to avoid any unequal contest with the superior enemy had to serve him therein as a rule. If he was menaced, even immediately before his arrival at Debreczin, by a preponderating force, he had to avoid it—as already pointed out—on the road to Derecske, and at once inform the main body of the army of it, that it might by an early forced march escape the danger of being taken in flank from Debreczin, and again reach an equal height with the flank-guard.

Thus ran the instructions given to General Nagy-Sándor in Nyiregyháza, before he left with the first corps the main body of the army for the purpose of forming its flank-guard during the march to the Berettyó.

On the 1st of August he reached Debreczin without danger, and reported that he had learned the enemy was stationed with about 15,000 men at Ujváros—three miles to the west of Debreczin on the road to Csege.

On the 2d of August the main body of the army arrived at Vámos-Pércs.

I was prepared to learn further from General Nagy-Sándor that the enemy threatened an attack from Ujváros with superior forces, and that the first corps would very probably be obliged to leave Debreczin in the course of the day. There arrived, however, at the head-quarters neither any such report from General Nagy-Sándor, nor the slightest indication of the situation of the first corps at Debreczin, which—as was evident afterward—was greatly endangered even on the morning of the 2d of August by the enemy's approach from Ujváros; and I was consequently justified in supposing that no hostile advance from Ujváros



against Debreczin had taken place—that the enemy, preparing for a decisive blow at us, was probably first concentrating the main body of his army at Ujváros.

But in contradiction to this supposition a remarkably brisk thunder of cannon was suddenly heard early in the afternoon from Debreczin. To discover as soon as possible the significance of the unexpected conflict, patrols of cavalry were immediately sent toward Debreczin.

After an hour or two's duration the cannonading ceased; of the patrols dispatched, however, none came back. Just as little did I receive in the course of the afternoon from General Nagy-Sándor any explanation of the enigmatical occurrence.

Under these circumstances no satisfactory idea of the state of affairs at Debreczin was to be gained. The apprehension that the first corps had suffered a defeat was contradicted by General Nagy-Sándor's *previous* silence. A hostile advance from Ujváros against Debreczin could not have remained undiscovered in broad daylight; and General Nagy-Sándor was not the man to consider a menacing hostile movement as unworthy of speaking about: he had hitherto always seen before him too many enemies, never too few, and at no time omitted in cases of danger threatening to ask very assiduously for further orders how to act.

The hope of news of victory, however, was contradicted by Nagy-Sándor's *subsequent* silence. It was not like him to be so long in announcing his victory. It was much more in accordance with his personal peculiarity to assume that in consequence of a defeat, he had become bewildered, and had forgotten his most urgent duty as leader of the flank-guard.

The non-return of the patrols of hussars sent toward Debreczin spoke equally for defeat and for victory. In the first case they might have perished; in the latter, for joy at the unexpected success of our arms, they might have located themselves in the first, best *csárda*, in a state of unfitness for service.

In this painful situation it seemed to me wisest to remain with the main body of the army at Vámos-Péres till daybreak; for only here could I expect, till the appointed time, Nagy-Sándor's report, or the final return of one of the patrols sent toward Debreczin; and without knowing what had really become of General Nagy-Sándor and the first corps, I could not possibly change the dispositions for the march, projected beforehand and com-

municated to him—according to which the main body of the army was not to leave Vámos-Pércs till the 3d of August—without apprehending that the derangement, which perhaps already existed in the combined movements of the main body and the flank-guard, might possibly be increased.

The advance of the main body from Vámos-Pércs toward Debreczin would have been the least appropriate measure I could have taken either *during* the cannonading or *after* it. The two-fold strategic object at which I had been steadily aiming since our departure from the position on the Henrád (namely, to gain betimes the river Berettyó, and to preserve the army from heavy losses), I believed was attainable only by avoiding as far as possible any encounter with the Russians on the territory between the Berettyó and the Theiss—not by seeking for one. Starting from this conviction, I had distinctly forbidden General Nagy-Sándor to accept any critical combat whatever.

If he had attended to this prohibition, then it was a victory he had just gained—probably over a weak hostile column which had approached separately—and the whole affair was quite in order, except the uncertainty in which I remained respecting it. But if he had not attended to this prohibition, then, considering his well-known want of decision in independent situations when before the enemy, it might be only the consequence of some neglect of which he had been guilty as leader of the flank-guard, and in that case I was likewise without any means of judging to what extent he had infringed my express prohibition; then it might as well have been 50,000 as 15,000 Russians by which he had been taken by surprise; then the main body, although it had set out for Debreczin at the beginning of the cannonading, might not only have arrived too late to prevent the first corps from being defeated, but it might even have exposed itself to the very danger from which it intended to save the first corps. In order to undertake this movement with the main body, under these circumstances, during the cannonading, I should have had to give up first of all the nearest strategic objects, which I had hitherto aimed at, or to convince myself that they could afterward be attained.

But after the sudden cessation of the cannonading there was no motive for this movement of the main body. For if General Nagy-Sándor had conquered, then the main body was superfluous

at Debreczin ; if he had taken to flight, then an advance of the main body toward Debreczin would only cause its separation from the flank-guard, and, moreover, the loss of the last possibility of reaching the Berettyó before the Russians.

I consequently resolved to maintain the point Vámos-Pércs till daybreak of the 3d of August, in case I should not sooner receive news from the flank-guard.

At last, shortly before the time fixed, a report reached the head-quarters at Vámos-Pércs. The chief of the general staff of the first corps announced from Berettyó-Ujfalu, that General Nagy-Sándor, in consequence of an overpowering attack, had been obliged to retreat from Debreczin as far as Berettyó-Ujfalu.

The main body consequently started without delay for Nagy-Léta ; halted there at mid-day ; and the same day, 3d of August, continued its march—which, in default of the flank-guard, was flanked by small detachments of hussars—as far as Kis-Marja.

Now if General Nagy-Sándor, conformably to the dispositions, remained with his corps behind Berettyó-Ujfalu on the Berettyó *à cheval* of the road to Gross-Wardein, and had not suffered any considerable losses at Debreczin, of which I was still uninformed, then the untoward occurrence of the preceding evening was really much less serious in its consequences than I had at first feared.

Soon after my arrival at Kis-Marja, however, I learned that General Nagy-Sándor had already deemed it necessary to give up even the line of the Berettyó, and to retreat uninterruptedly further on toward Gross-Wardein. At the same time I received some authentic indications of the disordered state of his corps. He had quite lost a great part of his artillery, which, wandering about in the district through which the main body was marching, had unfortunately been discovered by its patrols.

I now saw that, under these circumstances, I must abandon the idea of interrupting the southern advance of the Russian main army on the Berettyó, the course of which, moreover, in the dry season—as was evident—hinders the communication only on some points. After General Nagy-Sándor had retreated in the course of the day from Berettyó-Ujfalu (if I remember rightly) as far as Mező-Keresztes, and as I could not conceive but that this had been done in consequence of the Russians vehemently pressing after him ; I considered it dangerous for the main body to stay longer at Kis-Marja, because thereby the Russians



would be enabled, considering Nagy-Sándor's anticipated unenergetic resistance, to reach Gross-Wardein before the main body of our army, and thus cut off its further retreat to the Banat.

I accordingly moved the main body, during the night between the 3d and 4th of August, from Kis-Marja toward Bihar, in order to be able to reach Gross-Wardein with it in the course of the 4th should it prove necessary.

I learned, however, in Bihar, that the first Russian patrols had not pressed further on in the evening of the 3d than Berettyó-Ujfalu; so that General Nagy-Sándor had no reason whatever for retreating in the morning of that day from Mező-Keresztes. Just as little reason was there now to force the main body—which, in consequence of Nagy-Sándor's senseless retreat, had been obliged to march from daybreak till late in the morning of the 4th of August, a distance of seven miles—on the same day two miles further on to Gross-Wardein. It did not, therefore, arrive at that place till the day after, when it joined the flank-guard, the remnants of the first corps, which had meanwhile been reassembled.

With good reason I may be asked, how I came to tolerate General Nagy-Sándor, in spite of his negligent conduct before Waizen, where, in the night between the 16th and 17th of July, when departing from the camp, he had taken with him the out-posts, contrary to my express order, and had thereby rendered possible the hostile surprise which ensued;—in spite of the serious violation of duty of which he was guilty as commander of the rear-guard on the 18th and in the night between the 18th and 19th of July, in compelling the main body of the army to an uninterrupted continuance of the retreat, commencing from Balassa-Gyarmat, not only so long as the Russians were hotly following but even after this had ceased to be the case—instead of securing the possibility of the rest absolutely indispensable, as constantly as Generals Leiningen and Pöltenberg had done before him—until he was forced at last by his comrades to halt at Ráros, and occupy the defile there, which could easily be defended, but which he nevertheless abandoned in wild disorder during the night, though he had not been attacked, and thereby placed the whole army in a condition in which its further existence might have been jeopardized even by a single patrol of Cossacks;—in spite of the defeat which he had brought upon his corps at

Debreczin by disregarding my prohibition against engaging in any doubtful contest with the superior enemy ;—finally, in spite of the senseless retreat as far as Mezö-Keresztes, by which this defeat was followed :—how I came, in spite of all these striking proofs of manifold incapacity, still to tolerate General Nagy-Sándor in the army ; this question may certainly with good reason be put to me, who at one time proceeded with such an iron severity against the commanders of corps, Colonel Asbóth and General Knézich ; to me, who in general, during my official life, had not known how to gain for myself the honey-sweet surname of the “ mild ” and “ indulgent.”

This question may find an answer in the following :

None of these events, except one, had occurred immediately under my own eye. The explanations of them which I subsequently received—according to the source whence they came—were not unessentially different from each other ; their true nature could therefore by no means positively be placed beyond all doubt in a *summary way*. Moreover General Nagy-Sándor knew how to exculpate himself from the most important part of the blame with which he was charged in these cases, by always alleging some circumstances the credibility of which could not be contested.

In this manner he excused his retreat to Mezö-Keresztes (on the 3d of August) by the low moral condition of his troops ; which could the less be denied, as a part of the officers of the first corps fled from the scene at Debreczin in an uninterrupted course as far as Gross-Wardein, one other part still further—as I afterward learned, as far as Arad.

In like manner he excused the fact, that on the second of August at Debreczin he had not avoided the superior attack of the Russians, by enumerating circumstances which implicated exclusively the commander of his troops for security advanced from the camp at Debreczin toward Ujváros. He was certainly obliged to admit that he had been surprised by the Russians in broad mid-day ; but he could also detail the measures he had taken to prevent such a surprise, and could prove that the insufficiency of these measures was not to be ascribed to him. He could, it is true, scarcely deny that the hostile attack had not found him in the place of honor in front of his corps, but in the place of honor at a patriotic banquet, which had been given to

him and the body of his officers by the gentry of the city of Debreczin; but in answer to this he could very aptly remark, that the hostile attack would most certainly not have found him at the banquet, but in front of his corps, if the commander of the troops for security had fulfilled his duty.

In the same way he excused his flight from Ráros, representing it as a necessity forced upon him by the confusion, which most enigmatically suddenly prevailed among his troops and throughout the mass, to such a degree, that, among others, almost all the cavalry and draught-horses had run away at one time, as if they were mad; in consequence of which he was obliged, in order to pursue with his whole corps the runaway horses, to evacuate without delay the position he had taken up for the maintenance of the defile at Ráros. In these circumstances it was no small merit to him, that he had not had the draught-horses unyoked. Thus at least the horses could not run away without removing from the danger threatening from the enemy the whole artillery of the first corps. From the danger threatening from the enemy?!—doubtless; for General Nagy-Sándor originally justified his flight by maintaining that he had already been turned in his position at Ráros by the Russians; and only when the untenableness of that assertion had been proved by the simultaneous cessation of the hostile pursuit, he thought that not Cossacks but wolves might have been the enemy by which he imagined he had been turned and surprised in the night.

In the face of this incertitude on the part of Nagy-Sándor in indicating the danger which had impelled him to that most disastrous nightly flight, the necessity for it was indeed not sufficiently established, and it had undeniably the appearance as if in the night between the 18th and 19th of July, General Nagy-Sándor's heart had sunk far below the level of manliness; the circumstance, however, that during that night more than a hundred hussars' horses, belonging to the first corps, had been lost, furnished an irrefragable proof of the boundless confusion which must have prevailed among the troops of the first corps; and General Nagy-Sándor asserted, that he had left no means untried for putting a stop to the ever-widening dispersion of his corps; that he had at last been forced to continue the retreat during the night, in order to keep his corps in some measure together; the former assertion, that his position at Ráros had



been turned by the Russians, as well as the latter one, that his camp had been alarmed by wolves, he had not brought forward in justification of the flight, but as an excuse for his troops—and so forth.

In this manner he excused the fact, that in the course of the 18th of July, after he had succeeded General Pöltenberg in the rear-guard service at Balassa-Gyarmat, he had not in a single instance checked the hostile pursuit by the employment of all his power—as it was his duty to do—this fact he excused from the enormous superiority of the hostile forces pressing on closely after him.

Neither here, nor at Ráros, nor at Debreczin, nor finally in the flight to Mező-Keresztes, had I been personally present; a direct knowledge of the circumstances of the moment was consequently wanting to me, so that I could not judge of the responsibility of Nagy-Sándor, dependent thereon, for those acts of his, the consequences of which seemed nevertheless to deny that he was competent for the important post of a commander of corps.

Quite different had been the case with the two commanders of corps Knézich and Asbóth (before Pered on the 20th of June). There the conditions for an instant penal proceeding certainly existed: on my part, a direct perception of the matter on the spot; on the part of those liable to penalty, an absolute impossibility of laying the blame on others.

In order to be so circumstantially informed of the amount of Nagy-Sándor's blame in the disasters enumerated, as was needed for pronouncing a sentence with full conviction of its justice, I must have instituted a legal inquiry. For this there was evidently neither time nor opportunity.

I could have put in force the summary penal proceeding against Nagy-Sándor only in the one instance at Waizen: here there was no excuse. I had made him personally responsible for leaving behind the outposts established in front of the range of his camp. The outposts nevertheless departed. He could not possibly throw the responsibility of this upon any other person. And indeed it may appear as if I had been guilty of remarkable weakness in favor of General Nagy-Sándor, in intrusting him, in spite of this disobedience, any longer with the guidance of an army corps under such uncommonly critical circumstances as ours then were. I had, however, good reasons for this measure.

That General Nagy-Sándor was the least competent among the commanders of corps belonging to the army under my command, was certainly no secret to me long before the days at Waizen. But just as little was it unknown to me that the appointment of one of its chiefs of division to the post of commander of the first corps gave still less ground for hope than did the allowing Nagy-Sándor to continue in the post already confided to him. Consequently, in order to intrust the first corps to an undoubtedly more skillful guidance, I should have been obliged to appoint one of the chiefs of division of the third or seventh corps in the place of General Nagy-Sándor: from this experiment, however, I was decidedly dissuaded by my sad experience, on the 21st of June, at Pered, with the second corps, in consequence of a similar measure. After this experience, it appeared to me, in our desperate situation before Waizen, to be more advisable to retain to the first corps its old commander, though of little capacity, than to give to it instantly a new, even if undoubtedly a more skillful one, who, equally unacquainted with the peculiar spirit of the corps in general, as with that of every separate subdivision in particular, might, it is true, guard against tactic, though not against disciplinary mistakes: but in critical cases (I speak here from my own experience) disciplinary mistakes in a commander are mostly far more dangerous than tactic ones.

Consequently when, notwithstanding General Nagy-Sándor's indifferent trustworthiness and other fitness for the command committed to him, I did not remove him from it at Waizen, I yielded merely to the pressure of present circumstances, under the feeling that this measure, proportionately the least in its effects, would be the less disadvantageous, as I was at the same time determined in future personally to control him in the fulfillment of important missions. The physical condition in which the consequences of my strenuous personal participation in the events at Waizen placed me, unfortunately rendered the carrying out of this latter determination impossible.

Great were the material losses which the first corps sustained on the 2d of August at Debreczin—far greater still the moral ones. Taking into account the latter, I could not possibly any longer tranquilly intrust General Nagy-Sándor with the protective service during the further retreat.

The first corps had accordingly to set out first from Gross-

Wardein toward Arad, on the 6th of August; with the third and seventh corps, however, I intended to remain during the day at Gross-Wardein, that General Nagy-Sándor, with the first corps, might gain an advance of one day's march, and thereby, being removed out of danger from the enemy, get a few days' rest, which, in my opinion, both himself and his corps needed, that they might in some degree recover from the discouragement under which they were evidently laboring in consequence of the defeat at Debreczin.

However, in the forenoon of the 5th of August, in Gross-Wardein, I received a decree of the war-minister General Aulich, from which I concluded that Lieut.-General Dembinski had not assumed the offensive against the army under Baron Haynau—as I had been led to suppose by the earlier news from Szegedin—but, on the contrary, had already, on the first of August, given up the right and confined himself to the defense of the left bank of the Theiss; further, that I must now accelerate my retreat all I could, without heeding the Russian main army, and at the same time inform the government beforehand on what day the army under my command would reach Arad.

This decree decided me to have the first corps start from Gross-Wardein toward Arad in the course of the 5th, the third and seventh on the 6th of August. Without delay I sent to the war-minister the information that one-third of the army would arrive at Arad on the 10th, the remainder on the 11th.

On the retreat from Gross-Wardein to Arad, I received a second decree of the war-ministry, the substance of which was, that Lieut.-General Dembinski had already given up likewise the left bank of the Theiss, and had been ordered to retreat toward Arad, where the junction was to take place between his army and mine. I had consequently to expedite my march in such a manner as to reach Arad at least with one part of it by the 9th.

In compliance with this decree, I contracted the still remaining stations in such a manner that General Nagy-Sándor with the first corps arrived at Arad on the 9th, the third and seventh corps on the 10th of August.



## CHAPTER LXXV.

IN order not to confuse the account of the retreat from the Hernád to Arad, it was necessary to pass over in silence, in the preceding chapter, several simultaneous circumstances, rumors, and events, which, however, had exerted no influence on the progress of the campaign.

But before giving a supplementary relation of these circumstances, rumors, and events, I must point out my personal position to the army under my command, as well as to Kossuth and his political partisans and adversaries in the country.

The reader knows that during the last days in Komorn I had found by experience that my conviction of the impossibility of saving Hungary, and my consequent perception that our next patriotic duty was to terminate alike quickly and honorably the hopeless combat, were *not* shared by the majority of the coryphees of our main army when it was still assembled there. Nevertheless, by means of a decision of a military council, I had attempted—as has been stated in relating the last occurrences at Komorn in Chapter LXVI.—to oblige the main army to fulfill this duty: it is likewise known that I was unsuccessful therein—that the decision of the military council of the 6th of July limited my proposal (the main army to remain at Komorn and attack the Austrians), by accepting Klapka's amendment (after the attempt at breaking through the position of the Austrians—whether successful or not—the junction of the greater part of our main army with the government and the forces about concentrating themselves in the south of the country, to be fixed on as the next operation); further, that the majority of the military council had not even been in earnest about the experimental *one* attack on the position of the Austrians; and that on the following day, without my previous knowledge, the departure of the army on the left bank of the Danube had been commenced; that in consequence of this I had resigned the command, but, at the request of the deputies of the army, had promised to resume it, on con-

dition that the attack on the forces of Baron Haynau, resolved upon in the military council, was put in execution ; finally, that notwithstanding the negative result of this attack, made on the 11th of July under General Klapka's chief command, I was by no means released from my word of honor, given to the deputies of the army, to resume the command, and now (in the sense of the same decision of the military council, the carrying out of which I had made the condition of my resuming the command) to lead the greater part of the army—in spite of my openly expressed conviction of the forlorn hope of this measure—on the left bank of the Danube to join the government and the forces to be concentrated in the south of the country.

My position as commander-in-chief was consequently guaranteed not by the authority of the provisional government, but, on the contrary, in open opposition to it, solely and exclusively by the confidence of the army in my person—a confidence, however, which could not be founded on any kind of hope for salvation directly or indirectly excited or fostered by me.

After the departure from Komorn I remained passive in my behavior toward Kossuth and his partisans ; and when the provisional head of the country nevertheless felt moved to agitate against me even in his public speeches, I considered this to be nothing more than the after-pains of the terror which might have seized upon him in consequence of the well-known invitation to Komorn.

With Kossuth's adversaries external to the army under my command I had no connection whatever ; his opponents present with the army were my subordinates, they *must* remain passive, and they did so. That declaration, which had been dictated to me by the army as the answer to the Russian summons to lay down our arms, had indeed the serious significance of an aggression against Kossuth ; but was of no avail so long as the champions of the constitutional-monarchical principle, as well as the partisans of the unexpressed form of government (of the 14th of April), were forced by the dangerous superiority of the common external enemy to a *reciprocal toleration*. Besides, Kossuth's astonishment at this declaration of the army was certainly more than naïve ; since he could not possibly have forgotten that the main army had never thought of making him happy by an address of homage.

More than what precedes, relative to my position as respected the army, Kossuth, his opponents and partisans, during the retreat from Komorn to the Hernád, had not become clear to me.

I shall now proceed to throw some light upon those circumstances, rumors, and events, which, as belonging to the period of our sojourn on the Hernád and the further retreat to Arad, exerted no influence on the movements of the army I commanded, and were passed over in silence in the last chapter.

Kossuth's enigmatical reconciliatory private letter, already mentioned, and the official invitation to the proposed rendezvous in Kardszag or Kis-Ujszállás, did not long remain without a commentary : rumors from Szegedin spoke of a general discontent with the services of the chief command Mézsáros-Dembinski, and of lively sympathies, which, in spite of Kossuth's agitations against me, declared themselves now suddenly for my nomination as commander-in-chief of all the forces. Moreover I received almost at the same time a private letter from the first minister, Bartholomäus von Szemere, in which he gave me to understand that now was the favorable moment to overthrow Kossuth, and that if I liked I might share the supreme power with him (Szemere.)

The origin of Kossuth's enigmatical reconciliatory letter to me appeared accordingly to have been as follows :

Kossuth, indirectly accused by public opinion of having done something injurious to the national cause by creating the chief command Mézsáros-Dembinski, might have felt the necessity of preventing at any cost the indirect public accusation from being changed into a direct one, perhaps already menacing to become so.

The appropriate means for doing this—if the rumors about the change of the general sympathy in my favor were correct—could truly be no other than a comedy of reconciliation with the new favorite of the public, arranged by Kossuth himself. But that there must be something in the rumored change of the public opinion, of this Szemere's above-mentioned letter furnished me with a proof which was scarcely to be doubted. Szemere's personal hostility to Kossuth was no secret to me ; at least, from the malevolent manner in which Szemere always spoke of Kossuth whenever chance had brought us to a *tête-à-tête*, I could not do other than conclude that he was less a political than a *personal*



adversary of the provisional head of the country ;—and the circumstance that Szemere, whom my always equally reserved behavior toward him could by no means have authorized to suppose that he had succeeded in gaining my esteem, much less my confidence—that Szemere, who could not possibly have already forgotten the useless efforts made by him, during the honeymoon of his nascent republic, to gain me to a *liaison* against Kossuth—that Szemere thought now was the proper time to venture again on an attempt at this *liaison* ;—this circumstance certainly could not be explained otherwise than by admitting that the rumors about the lively sympathy of the public opinion for me were supported by facts.

The authentic confirmation of these rumors, however, I received first from the communications of a representative, who, coming from Szegedin, arrived at Nagy-Kálló on the very same day as that on which I reached it with the main body of the army. This was on the 31st of July.

These communications were to the effect, that the majority of the Diet had proposed to the provisional government to transfer to me the chief command over all the troops ; and an affirmative answer had thereupon been given to the Diet by Szemere, in the name of the provisional government. But at the same time I learned from this representative that on the 28th of July the Diet had determined on a dissolution for an indefinite period, and that the majority of the representatives had in fact already left Szegedin to join my head-quarters.

I thought that I perceived in the proposal of the majority of the Diet the influence of the peace-party. But as, notwithstanding the pressure of circumstances, my nomination as commander-in-chief had not yet taken place, I could not but doubt the sincerity of the answer which Szemere had given to the Diet in the name of the provisional government. This doubt I believed I ought the less to conceal from the representative, by whom the communications in question had orally been made to me, as his other declarations showed me that he and the majority of his colleagues had formed no small expectations from my nomination as commander-in-chief. This doubt, however, was not felt by the representative. With no less confidence than himself, his colleagues also might have received Szemere's official answer ; and thus the rumor that the provisional government had already

transferred to me the chief command over all the troops, together with all the expectations connected with it, were soon generally spread, and seemed, moreover, to be justified by the simultaneous journey of two members of the provisional government to the camp of the army under my command.

These members of the government were Szemere and the minister of the exterior, Count Kasimir Batthyányi. They arrived on the 1st of August at my head-quarters in Nyir-Adony. The first opportunity, however, I gave them of holding a conference with me was at Vámos-Pécs (the next station), in the afternoon of the following day. For I thought it a punishment quite appropriate to Szemere's above-mentioned letter to overlook him in a marked manner for a time, and thus expose him to the sarcasms of the officers present at the head-quarters.

Count Batthyányi, as Szemere's companion, had accordingly to suffer with him; but I had intended the punishment for the latter alone. For in order intentionally to expose the minister of the exterior to the treatment which his colleague Szemere received in the head-quarters, I should have wanted beforehand positive reasons (which I in fact had not) for supposing that he was privy to Szemere's letter, or that he perhaps even agreed with it.

Of the official significance of the sudden arrival of both ministers at the head-quarters I had not at first been informed. That the object of this mission was my nomination as commander-in-chief, as had been generally supposed, appeared to me highly improbable, considering the *entente peu cordiale* between myself and the provisional government, now relieved of the Diet. But, on the contrary, I did not for a moment doubt that Szemere had not come without the positive intention of sounding the effect of his private letter, and accomplishing, if possible, in the shortest way the league Szemere-Görgei *contra* Kossuth, covertly projected in this letter; and Szemere did not at all allow himself to be deterred, by the sarcasms of those surrounding me, from confirming this opinion about the personal object of his arrival at the head-quarters:—the first question he addressed to me at Vámos-Pécs, on the occasion of an accidental *tête-à-tête*, was in fact, *whether I had received his letter*.

This *tête-à-tête* between myself and Szemere was brought about contrary to my intention, when I conducted both ministers to my

room—at last acceding, on the afternoon of the 2d of August, to their desire for a conference with me—and Count Batthyányi, as if by chance, stopped behind some minutes, leaving me alone with Szemere.

Shortly before, the cannonading, which indicated to us in Vámos-Pércs the attack of the Russians on our flank-guard at Debreczin, had ominously suddenly again ceased, and I was in consequence very restless.

In a more favorable disposition of mind I could hardly have resisted the temptation to ridicule the truly rare confidence with which Szemere had put this question to me, in spite of the treatment, any thing but inviting, which he had just met with from me and those about me. The painful incertitude, however, in which I was as to the issue of the conflict at Debreczin, saved Szemere from a new well-merited chastisement.

After having simply answered in the affirmative his question (whether I had received his letter), I thwarted Szemere's probable intention of questioning me still further relative to its contents and tendency, by a quick counter-question about the rumor of my nomination as commander-in-chief of all the troops. For this Szemere might not have been quite prepared; since he at first asserted, that the cause of this rumor was altogether unknown to him; and after I had told him what I had learnt about it on the 31st of July, at Nagy-Kálló, he admitted that the choice of me as commander-in-chief had in fact been spoken of in the Diet, but declared as wholly without foundation the rumor that a motion had been made by the Diet concerning this choice, as well as that an affirmative answer had been given by him in the government's name.

At that moment Count Batthyányi interrupted the *tête-à-tête*; and now I learnt the real object of the official mission on which the two ministers had been sent by the provisional government.

This was no other than to make use of the last means for the salvation of the formless State of Hungary, independent of Austria (dating from Debreczin the 14th of April, 1849), that is, to offer the crown of Hungary to the dynasty of Romanow.

The reader—from what has hitherto been communicated of my life and acts—might perhaps be of opinion that my proposal in the ministerial council of the 26th of June (if possible only to negotiate with the Russians, but to attack the Austrians simul-



taneously with all the forces at our disposal) was the origin of this last idea of salvation.

This opinion, however, would be contradicted by a circumstance which has not yet been mentioned, namely, that Kossuth, long before the 14th of April, 1849, consoled those who even then despaired of the salvation of the country with the assurance that he had already entered into diplomatic negotiations abroad, having for their object, that in the worst case the Duke of Leuchtenberg should ascend the throne of Hungary, binding himself to govern constitutionally, under the protectorate of Russia.

It might indeed be answered to this, that the Russian intervention and the official crusade-sermon against it existed as *faits accomplis* between the time in which the honor was conferred on the Duke of Leuchtenberg of serving Kossuth as a last resource, and the day on which Szemere and Count Batthyányi were charged with the said mission—that consequently Kossuth's parading of his foreign diplomatic connections was doubtless nothing more than one of those numerous impostures by which he thought it necessary often to degrade himself so remarkably in the interest of "the liberation of Europe." Against this conclusion I certainly could not make any weighty objection.

But I should nevertheless be obliged to deny the correctness of the supposition that the provisional government had been led to that idea, which was now about being realized by the two ministers Szemere and Count Batthyányi, by my proposal in the ministerial council of the 26th of June; for if the provisional government had hit upon this idea on the 26th of June in consequence of my proposal—moreover by a quite illogical and arbitrary interpretation of it—then this circumstance could not possibly have remained a whole month without producing the least real consequence: such a consequence, however, exists nowhere in the acts of the provisional government during the interval of time from the 26th of June, to the end of July, 1849.

To judge by the experience I had acquired relative to the manner of thinking and acting of Kossuth and Szemere (the two members of the provisional government most eminent by position and influence), the ministerial decision, dating from the last days of July, in consequence of which Szemere and Count Batthyányi suddenly emerged in my immediate vicinity with the well-known

mission, was brought about by the co-operation of the following circumstances :

1. At the end of July even Kossuth's and Szemere's hopes of a favorable result from Dembinski's offensive operations—intended against the Austrians, as was said—began gradually to fail : a proof of this was the undisguised way in which Kossuth agreed, in his private letter to me, in my unfavorable judgment on the chief command Dembinski-Mészáros.

2. The provisional government received about the same time, in quick succession, my reports—

a) On the summons to lay down our arms made by the Russians to me, and my reply thereto ;

b) On the breaking through the line of operation of the Russian main army by the three army corps acting under my orders, already supposed to be accomplished with the gaining of the line of the Sajó.

c) On the correspondence between the Russian Count Rüdiger and myself. This report—if I recollect rightly—was accompanied by a suggestion that two men, invested by the government with full power, should be sent into my immediate vicinity ; or at least that it should be told me what I was to do, in case my answer to the letter of the Count should be followed by the Russians proposing some conditions of peace.

3. Simultaneously the well-known exchange of arms was rumored abroad in Szegedin. The importance of this act was exaggerated. I was said to be already on the best terms with the Russians ; their negotiators were continually moving to and fro in my head-quarters ; the officers of the army under my command were fraternizing with those of the Russian army ; the war was continued only for form's sake, as it were, and peace between Hungary and Russia would have been made long ago if the government had allowed me to act as I liked ; with the government, however, the Russians would have nothing to do ; the salvation of the country was conceivable only in a peaceable way, and only through me ; for only with me—the undisguised opponent of the declaration of independence of the 14th of April, 1849—would the Austrians as well as the Russians treat ; and so on.

Deceived in the expectations which Lieut.-General Dembinski,

as a general, had been appointed to justify; and well knowing the depressed condition in which Field-marshal Lieut. Bem was in Transylvania—consequently without the hope of continuing to maintain himself in the Banat even defensively, much less of offensively breaking out of it; not less well informed of the numerical superiority of the Russian main army over the forces united under my command, and although inexhaustible in projecting plans of war-operations calculated infallibly to destroy the Austrians as well as the Russians, yet doubtful himself of their practicability; in the midst of this comfortless situation surprised by the letter of the commander of the Russian corps, Count Rüdiger, to me, and considering it to be nothing less than an indubitable proof that the Russians were seriously thinking about concluding a profitable peace with Hungary separately; fully confirmed in this supposition by the rumors enumerated under point 3, nay, by these rumors even induced to suspect that I intended to come to an agreement with the Russians on my own account, and to leave the provisional government shelterless; finally, not quite secure also against the twofold illusion, that Hungary was certainly still to be saved by negotiations, but that the enemy would treat only with me; and thus, on the one hand, urged by the public opinion to the way of pacification, supposed to be open; on the other, fearing to become shelterless, in case the negotiations, which were said to be in the best train, should in future be left *to me alone*;—Kossuth, supported by Szemere, was determined to take into his own hands the negotiations with the Russians, and in case of necessity even to sacrifice the crown of St. Stephen; for only by offering *more* than I could do (the crown not being in my possession), could Kossuth and Szemere hope to induce the Russians to make peace with *them* (Kossuth and Szemere, that is, the provisional government), not with me.

This determination, consequently, could not have been long and maturely considered; we can conceive and judge of it only as come to in despair; especially as Kossuth must thereby involve himself in most critical situations as regarded the Poles—his exclusive fellow-champions for “the freedom of Europe.” This dangerous consequence also had by no means been overlooked by Kossuth; and principally to avoid disagreeable collisions with the Poles, the real object of the official mission (Sze-



mere and Count Batthyányi's into my immediate vicinity) was kept secret. But as the mission itself could not possibly remain unknown, Kossuth had it rumored that Szemere and Count Batthyányi conveyed to me the nomination of general-in-chief of all the Hungarian forces. This device had moreover the advantage, that it thereby seemed as if the growing public sympathies for my person, as well as the rumored pretensions of the Szegedin population (to give me full authority in the "saving" negotiations with the Russians) had been respected, and consequently that the suppressed spirit of the people could again in some measure raise itself; an advantage, to gain which Kossuth, it is well known, shunned scarcely any means. That the rumors about my nomination as generalissimo, as well as about my being now free to treat according to my own judgment for peace with the Russians, must unavoidably expose him to the danger of coming into conflict with the Poles (thanks to the small sympathy I had hitherto shown for them)—this Kossuth had not to fear so long as Lieut.-General Dembinski and Field-marshal Lieut. Bem received no orders from me—so long as he (Kossuth) kept *in petto* the real nomination of Field-marshal Lieut. Bem as commander-in-chief of all the troops in Hungary and Transylvania, and with it the infallible means for convincing the Poles, at any moment, of his faithfulness toward them—and so long as he secured to himself, by keeping secret the real object of Szemere and Count Batthyányi's mission, the possibility of inducing those Poles, who might be rendered suspicious by these rumors, to believe that Szemere and Count Batthyányi had been sent to me only to prevent intended treachery on my part, and consequently as guardians, as it were, of "the freedom of Europe." With all this, however, it is not yet explained, how Kossuth could calculate on reaping advantage from the negotiations with Russia, without in the end *nevertheless* exposing the Poles, and with them "the freedom of Europe." And for this very reason we must assume that his determination—to offer the crown of Hungary to the dynasty of Romanow, with the simultaneous project (afterward really executed, as we shall see) of intrusting to a Pole the chief command over all the Hungarian armies—had been formed in the delirium of sudden despair and absolutely without reflection.

By this I do not mean to say that I had wholly abandoned the idea of treating with the Russians for peace. On the contrary, I

even now acknowledge this idea—if it could have been realized—to have been the only one from which, under the then existing circumstances, none of the parties armed in the country against Austria would have dissented.

For the partisans and defenders of the law sanctioned by the King, the overthrow of which was the real object of Austria—for the sole party in the country which had any thing positive to lose—it could scarcely be difficult to make choice between Russian sovereignty and privileged incorporation with Austria, as soon as they considered that Russia, if it thought seriously of acquiring Hungary, must necessarily also intend to retain it in her possession.

The party of the “unexpressed form of government” had nothing to lose, not even a principle—as their title indeed betrays—unless it were that of being independent of Austria ; and this principle, they might be certain, remained intact to them under Russia’s sovereignty.

The true republicans, finally, could only gain in wide and ample Russia what they had in Hungary—a missionary sphere of action.

For the Poles indeed it must have been difficult to choose between Austria and Russia : “the freedom of Europe” here as well as there was given up ! But what the Poles did, after Russia did not make peace, they could just as well have done in the contrary case. Besides, I was speaking above only of those parties who inhabited the country. And so long as the facts—that my name suddenly began again to become popular after the appeal to the constitution of the country of the year 1848 had been dictated to me by the army under my command, as an answer to the Russian summons to lay down our arms, and this document, together with the letter of Count Rüdiger, and the exchange of arms, had become publicly known ; further, that Kossuth personally had come to the determination, not perhaps to accede to the proposal of the Russians, but himself to make proposals to them ; finally, that Szemere personally carried out this determination, without either himself or Kossuth having been disavowed for this act by the parties of the “republic” or of the “unexpressed form of government ;”—so long as these facts are not refuted, I must adhere to the declaration, that the idea of treating for peace with Russia—if it could have been realized

—was, under all the then existing conjunctures, the sole saving one, and as such recognized by all parties in the country which shared in the combat against Austria.

This idea, however, could *not* be realized so long as the Russians only desired us to lay down our arms, but made no proposals for peace; and I certainly can not compliment Kossuth and Szemere for overlooking this circumstance.

The first conference with Szemere and Count Batthyányi at Vámos-Pécs, which betrayed to me the already formed resolution of the provisional government to give even the crown of Hungary for peace with Russia, was in substance as follows:

Szemere, the real actor in the mission (Count Batthyányi's co-operation seemed to be confined to that of translator) began by asking how far I had already got in my negotiations with the Russians.

I replied, that this could not be unknown to the government, seeing I had sent it a copy of the correspondence between Count Rüdiger and myself.

But since then, said Szemere, I had, as the government had learnt, repeatedly exchanged trumpets with the Russians.

As I thought that Szemere, in the presence of his colleague, stood no longer before me as Kossuth's artful rival, but as the organ of the government, I took very seriously this question betraying distrust, and indeed considered the whole conference to be strictly official; and endeavored (as I certainly should not have done if I had had a contrary opinion of the significance of the meeting) circumstantially to explain to the ministers the estimate to be formed of the reports of my "having repeatedly exchanged trumpets" with the Russians, if the government did not wish to give way to silly illusions. I assured the ministers that I had come in contact with no Russian trumpet, except in the known instance at Rimaszombat; that the pistols of Lieut.-General Sass and Colonel Chrulow had been brought to me by our own trumpets—the same as had gone from Sajó-Szent-Péter to the next Russian camp with our answer to the proposal to lay down our arms; that my second sending of trumpets to the commanders of the Russian advanced troops had for its object solely to enable me to make the return demanded by their chivalric courtesy; that consequently those reports of my "having repeatedly exchanged trumpets" with the Russians could only refer to



the fact—not known to myself till afterward, and which certainly redounded to his honor—that Count Leiningen, as conqueror of Gesztely (on the 28th of July), had permitted the trumpet, whom the Russians had sent to him out of subsequent anxiety about the fate of their wounded men whom they had left behind on the field of battle, to convince himself personally of the conscientiousness with which these unfortunates had already received from our worthy surgeons such attention as was necessary.

Szemere now further inquired, whether it did not seem to me, nevertheless, that the Russians were not disinclined to enter in earnest into negotiations with us, and that offers of peace were to be expected from them.

To this I answered, that I had not yet formed any opinion on the diplomatic speculations of the Russians; but that thus much the provisional government might consider certain, that if the Russians had felt a desire to make peace with us, they would hardly have left my answer to Count Rüdiger, inviting them thereto, without a reply, as was really the case; that consequently the provisional government would wait in vain for a proposal of peace from the Russians; that if the provisional government wished to negotiate, or at least convince itself whether the Russians had any inclination thereto or not, it must itself take the initiative, with a proposal of conditions of peace clearly and distinctly expressed.

Szemere in consequence resolved immediately to draw up a letter to Prince Paszkiewicz, and hand it to me to be forwarded to the Russian camp.

Late in the evening of the 4th of August, in the station at Bihar, a single Russian officer (Lieutenant Miloradowicz) arrived at the head-quarters, as trumpet, sent by Prince Paszkiewicz, with the double commission to furnish the Russian officers who were our prisoners with the money necessary for their more suitable maintenance—and to return to me those arms which I had sent to the camp of the Russian corps posted at Miskolez on the 26th of July, as counter-presents for Lieut.-General Sass and Colonel Chrulow.

Prince Paszkiewicz—so the trumpet declared—deemed it inadmissible to permit his generals and officers, in the face of the alliance existing between Russia and Austria, to accept presents from the enemies of the latter.

To this I replied, that in my present position I deemed it not less inadmissible to accept presents for which I could make no return; that consequently Lieutenant Miloradowicz would have the goodness forthwith to receive the arms which had been sent to me in the form of presents by Lieut.-General Sass and Colonel Chrulow, and restore them to their former owners.

To do this—the trumpet said—was opposed to his notions of honor; and he preferred, on his own responsibility, to go back with my counter-presents sent for Lieut.-General Sass and Colonel Chrulow, and report what I had said—consequently without accomplishing his mission.

And thus this matter ended. But in order to execute his first-mentioned commission, as the prisoners were escorted with the army-train, and it was stationed on the 4th of August at Gross-Wardein, the Russian trumpet had to go there: this was not practicable, however, that night, it being very dark in consequence of the rainy weather which had set in; he therefore remained for the night in Bihar, and was conducted to Gross-Wardein next morning.

Szemere and Count Batthyányi hastened thither, in advance, on the 4th of August, and had already completed the diplomatic letter to Prince Paszkiewicz when I arrived with the headquarters and the Russian trumpet. Consequently the return of the latter to the Russian camp furnished an opportunity for sending this letter, with an introduction by me, to its destination.

In this introductory note the often-mentioned letter of Count Rüdiger was indicated as the occasion of this step being taken by the provisional government.

The contents of the letter made on me the impression of an open complaint against Austria, and a disguised invitation to Russia to take advantage of the serious rupture between Austria and Hungary by making peace with the latter. Being asked by Szemere my opinion of the practical value of this letter, I remarked that it would hardly repay the trouble he had taken with the rough-draught. The Russians—thus I supported my unfavorable judgment—would most probably answer this invitation as they did that contained in my reply to Count Rüdiger—with silence only and an uninterrupted prosecution of their war-operations; but this seemed not to be sufficiently clear to the provi-

sional government : it had consequently to expect no result whatever from this letter.

Now it is impossible for me to decide whether Szemere had been convinced by me ; or had been induced to strive more energetically for the object of his mission, perhaps in consequence of General Nagy-Sándor's defeat at Debreczin, and of the news that Lieut.-General Dembinski had already given up Szegedin, as well as of the uninterrupted continuance of the retreat to Arad of the army under my command. The fact is, that he invited me again to a secret conference with him and his colleague on the evening of the next day (6th of August) in the station Gyapju.

Szemere opened the conference by declaring, that, as I was decidedly of opinion that the Russians should be forthwith invited to negotiate, and at the same time conditions more advantageous to them be indicated—he had drawn up a new letter to Prince Paszkiewicz, and was desirous of having my judgment upon it.

By this introduction Szemere evidently acted as if he had been urged by me to repeat the attempt to enter into negotiations with Russia, and moreover as if the determination of the government, in virtue of which Szemere had dispatched the Gross-Wardein letter, and was about to follow it by a second, was in some manner a concession made to me personally.

The perception of this matured in me the resolution to make the ministers feel that I did not mistake the tendency of their mission, and at the same time show them the folly of their endeavors. Beforehand, however, I let Szemere read without interruption the rough-draught of which he had just spoken. It was a paraphrase of those passages of the Gross-Wardein letter which had made upon me the impression of the conscious “disguised invitation to Russia.” My judgment on the value of his paraphrase was similar to that which I had given on the Gross-Wardein letter.

Szemere, evidently piqued, now asked me what it was, then, that I wished to be said to the Russians.

Hereupon I declared to him, that *I* felt no need whatever to have any thing of the kind said to the Russians, because I was convinced they would not negotiate with us ; and that even if I was not yet convinced of it, to be so would cost me only the slight trouble of fancying myself in the position of the Russian general. That with such a force as he had at his command, *I* at least



would not negotiate; and that I had no reason to suppose the Russian under-estimated his superior force. It therefore lay with *the government*—not with me—to obtain a still more distinct answer than Nagy-Sándor's defeat at Debreczin to the question, whether there were, or were not, any terms on which Russia would make peace with Hungary; and consequently the government had so to put its question to the Russians, as that *no* answer would finally nevertheless be *one*. Let the government plainly offer to the Czar the crown of Hungary; and even if no answer at all were given thereto, it would assuredly not be able any longer to doubt of what it wished to convince itself.

Szemere thought, on the other hand, that it was not usual to express one's self so explicitly in a diplomatic document. Nevertheless he must admit that the rough-draught lying before us said too little. He would immediately alter it: I might meanwhile appoint the trumpets; in choosing which, care should be taken that both of them by their personal qualities authorized the hope of a favorable result from the mission intrusted to them. At least one of the trumpets, by his high rank, should give as it were a guarantee to the enemy that we were in earnest in the proposals of peace and the advantageous conditions offered. The other, again, should possess the necessary knowledge, and the corresponding talent as a speaker, to be able to give in the hostile camp the most thorough explanations upon the historical relation of rights between Hungary and Austria, and by contrasting it with recent events to place beyond doubt as well our right to take *any* step against Austria, as to show the sincerity of our proposals to Russia.

In consequence of my undisguised declaration, which openly exposed the provisional government, I thought I must be prepared for a sudden breaking-off of the conference on the part of the ministers, as well as for a final abandonment of all further attempts at pacification. The striking proof which Szemere had now given me, contrary to all expectation, of the diametrically opposite effect of the utterance of my sentiments, surprised me consequently to such a degree, that I could not forbear answering to the just-received instructions about the qualities desirable in the trumpets, by proposing that Szemere himself should start as trumpet with the new letter to the Russian camp, combining as he did in himself the advantages of high rank, talents as a

speaker, and an intimate acquaintance with the historical relation of rights between Hungary and Austria.

Szemere did not approve of this ; he objected, that his personal safety did not appear to be sufficiently guaranteed in the camp of the Russians.

If this was his opinion—I answered—I wished he would not in future expect me to order any person of high rank in the army to perform the duty of trumpet ; as it was impossible for me to conceive how the safety in the Russian camp of any other person of high rank was more guaranteed than that of the minister ; he (Szemere) must therefore bestir himself to gain one of the commanders of corps—perhaps General Pöltenberg, as he spoke French—for the trumpet-service, which appeared dangerous to him (Szemere). If General Pöltenberg declared himself willing, I should have no objection to his undertaking this service.

The ministers hereupon broke off the conference, and went to alter the rough-draught of the new letter, and seek for General Pöltenberg in his camp.

The latter declared himself ready to go as trumpet to the Russian camp ; and left the army with his suite on the morning of the 7th of August, after he had received the dispatch for Prince Paszkiewicz directly from the ministers. How the new letter turned out, after the alterations resolved upon in it, I did not know. The ministers dispatched it *without having previously communicated it to me*. Nor did they again honor me with their confidence during the whole of the subsequent march to Arad.

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## CHAPTER LXXVI.

WHEN the army under my command had been established on the Hernád, and I had been informed of the state of affairs in the south of the country, I had perceived—as the reader will recollect—that to obtain possession of Temesvár was now the next object of the strategic activity of the chief command Dembinski-Mészáros, of Field-marshal Lieutenant Bem, and of myself.

Dembinski-Mészáros had consequently to maintain the lower Theiss, Bem at least the southwestern part of Transylvania,

and myself to keep the Russian main army at a distance from the line of the Maros.

Should it happen, however, that one of these three tasks had to be abandoned, in order that *one* energetic stroke against Austria, even were it the last, might precede Hungary's approaching fall, the further protection of the siege of Temesvár must give way to the higher object of rendering possible such a stroke.

A perception of this seemed likewise to be expressed in those decrees of the war-minister which determined me in Gross-Wardein not to interrupt the retreat of the army, accelerated in consequence of General Nagy-Sándor's defeat, but to continue it unstoppped further toward Arad, nay even to force it in its latter half. For Arad had been pointed out in these decrees as the common point of retreat for Lieut.-General Dembinski's army, and for that which I commanded. Consequently at Arad—as I understood the meaning of these dispositions—in the worst case, even with the simultaneous raising of the siege of Temesvár, the concentration of both armies should take place, and the Austrians, without regard to the Russian main army, should be immediately after attacked with superior force.

When, on the 9th of August, I arrived with the first corps at Arad, I learned, however, that Lieut.-General Dembinski—having been defeated on the 5th at Szőrez by Baron Haynau—had directed his retreat, contrary to the instructions of the war-minister, not toward Arad, but toward Temesvár; and that consequently the army under my command had to continue its march uninterruptedly further toward Temesvár, in order to join that of Dembinski.

As to the reasons which might have determined Lieut.-General Dembinski to retreat to Temesvár, I received no explanation either from Kossuth or from the war-minister: I could only guess them from facts which I learned afterward. Nevertheless, with all my uncertainty of the cause, the circumstance that Dembinski's army on the 9th of August was *not* at Arad, and *no longer* between Arad and Szegedin, of itself sufficed completely to lower the expectations I had originally associated (when in Gross-Wardein) with the proposed concentration of both armies—expectations which had to be reduced even during the retreat from Gross-Wardein to Arad to an extremely modest limit; various unfavorable rumors from the camp of Dembinski having by de-



grees reached me. According to these rumors, the chief command Dembinski-Mészáros seemed to enjoy the confidence of the army just as little as the former (Mészáros-Dembinski); and as I knew by experience, that decisive moments decompose even the best organized army, if it has no confidence in its leader, I could not possibly suppose that Dembinski's army, after the defeat at Szőrez, was in *that* disciplinary condition in which it ought to be, to co-operate adequately in the offensive intended by me against the Austrians, when the junction of both armies had been successfully effected. My expectations from this offensive—which therefore were by no means extravagant—in consequence of Dembinski's army having retreated toward Temesvár (instead of toward Arad) were now completely abated; because this arbitrary change of the point of retreat, delaying the junction of the two armies at least two days (the distance from Arad to Temesvár is six miles), Dembinski's army remained all that time the longer exposed *by itself* to the attacks of the Austrians, and, should they be aware of their advantage, it might be pressed back even beyond Temesvár, before it could be possible for the three army corps under my command to reach this point.

Consequently, by Dembinski's retreat to Temesvár (instead of to Arad), the postulate of the intended offensive against the Austrians—the junction of our armies—was already rendered doubtful; and by the afternoon of the 10th of August I was to be furnished with sufficient reason to apprehend that the Austrians knew how to improve energetically the advantage offered them by Lieut.-General Dembinski.

For on the morning of the 10th of August, General Nagy-Sándor, with the first corps, had already broken up his bivouac at Arad, in order to advance on the road to Temesvár on this day as far as Vinga, and on the following day to join Dembinski's army concentrated at Temesvár. Nagy-Sándor was followed by Generals Leiningen and Pöltenberg, with the third and seventh army corps, on the 10th as far as Arad, which were to reach Vinga on the 11th, and on the 12th to effect their immediate junction with Dembinski's army.

The head-quarters of the army had to remain during the 10th still in Alt-Arad.

In the course of the afternoon of this day the following reports from General Nagy-Sándor arrived at head-quarters.

"10th August, 12 o'clock noon.

"The enemy, composed of all kinds of arms, is posted behind Dreispitz on the eminence. During our forcible reconnoitring he briskly cannonaded us with two batteries. A wounded officer had previously arrived from the direction of Temesvár, and informs us that a battle was fought yesterday, in consequence of which our troops must retreat toward Lugos. I ask, how far my mission extends, in case I should be attacked by a superior enemy. My present position is on this side Dreispitz near the vineyards, and I observe a defensive bearing; I expect consequently very speedily further orders. Hostile columns are at this moment seen on the eminence beyond Dreispitz, a part of which, consisting of cavalry, is moving toward the Maros in my right flank.

(Signed) "NAGY-SÁNDOR."

The second (later) report was as follows :

"The enemy is advancing with superior forces. Further orders are required with all possible speed; the more so, as he threatens to turn our right flank.

(Signed) "NAGY-SÁNDOR.

"Dispatched at one o'clock afternoon."

On the first of these reports I sent orders to General Nagy-Sándor resolutely to accept the combat, and fight manfully. In case, however, he should be repulsed, he had to draw back *à cheval* of the road to Neu-Arad, and cover this point, together with the passages across the Maros.

But the second report determined me to hasten in person to the battle-field; because, from Nagy-Sándor's statement of the superior forces of the enemy, as well as from his repeated request for further orders—in a case like the present, in which, considering the simplicity of the situation, this demand was quite superfluous—I was unfortunately obliged to suspect that, as usual, he was deficient in that presence of mind and resolution, without which the military honor of his corps must be compromised.

While in the streets of Alt-Arad, I encountered a further report that General Nagy-Sándor was already in full retreat. A desire to obtain beforehand some knowledge of the ground, which was altogether strange to me, led me first of all on to the glacis of the fortress: here, however, I incidentally received an invitation from Governor Kossuth to be present at a ministerial council just about to take place; and consequently I could not in person hinder Nagy-Sándor from continuing his hasty retreat, which had already been prosecuted to within sight of Neu-Arad,

but had to confine myself merely to repeatedly reminding him, in the worst case to maintain at least Neu-Arad.

The circumstance, that a hostile corps dared to advance in an offensive manner toward Arad, with Temesvár in its rear, seemed to confirm the assertion of the wounded officer, contained in Nagy-Sándor's first report, according to which the Austrians had forced Dembinski on the previous day to retreat from Temesvár toward Lugos.

Nevertheless Kossuth opened the ministerial council, in which I had been called upon to take part, with the assurance that he had received from a trustworthy source news that Dembinski's army had gained a victory at Temesvár on the previous day (the 9th of August) over the Austrians. The latter had been the assailants; and Dembinski, at the commencement of the combat, was indeed again about abandoning the field, when Field-marshal Lieut. Bem had suddenly arrived on the battle-field, immediately taken the command, and from the already ordered retreat had without delay assumed the offensive. So it is reported—continued Kossuth in his communications—by two officers of Dembinski's army, who were wounded just at the time of Bem's arrival on the field of battle, and who continued to observe for some hours, from the spot where their wounds were dressed, the uninterrupted advance of our troops afterward. When these two officers—Kossuth further related—were removed from that place to be conveyed to Arad, the combat was not yet ended; nevertheless, it might be supposed without improbability, that, after the general change in the state of affairs in our favor caused by Bem's sudden appearance, the day had remained ours.

This supposition, I remarked, appeared indeed to be contradicted by the direction from which that hostile corps advanced against Arad, before which Nagy-Sándor was just now retreating: however, it was quite possible that the governor might be better informed about the events which had taken place on the preceding evening at Temesvár, than I, who had received directly contrary news respecting them; and it was the more desirable for us that the assumed victory of Dembinski's army should be confirmed, as in that case the Austrian corps which was now pursuing Nagy-Sándor would probably be destroyed within twenty-four hours; since I intended to cross the Maros with our third



and seventh corps during the night, and advance even offensively at daybreak in the direction toward Temesvár. But now—I further remarked—I must ask to have it explained, how it was to be understood, that Field-marshal Lieut. Bem, who I thought was in Transylvania, suddenly appeared on the 9th of August on the battle-field of Temesvár, and in the presence of Lieut.-General Dembinski took upon himself the command of the latter's army. From an earlier communication of the governor's—I continued—it was known to me that Bem on the 31st of July had sustained a severe defeat at Marosvásárhely;\* of later victories of our armies in Transylvania, however, I had heard nothing whatever; the state of affairs there could consequently not possibly be such as to render superfluous the personal presence of Field-marshal Lieut. Bem within the sphere of the operations of his own army: how then could he quit his post in Transylvania? how could he command at Temesvár an army, the guidance of which was intrusted to Lieut.-General Dembinski?

Kossuth replied to this, that at the time when he invited me to the well-known rendezvous (in Kardszag or Kis-Ujszallás), he had already perceived the necessity of intrusting to one man the chief command over all the forces of the country, and had desired the meeting with me mainly for the purpose of consulting me about the choice of a commander-in-chief; but as this meeting did not take place, and his confidence in Dembinski's abilities had day after day been more shaken, it appeared to him necessary for the salvation of the country to place the conduct of the army in the Banat very speedily in more trustworthy hands; and thus Bem was called for in person to the Banat, in order to make good again, if possible, what Dembinski had undone.

From this explanation it could not yet be inferred who commanded the army in Transylvania in the stead of Bem, or what was the position Dembinski was now occupying in the army of the Banat; generally, in what form Bem's recall from Transyl-

\* It should be, "at Schäsburg" (in Transylvania). Bem's report to Kossuth on the defeat he had sustained there on the 31st of July might have been dated from Marosvásárhely (because Bem immediately after the defeat had hastened to Marosvásárhely), and Kossuth might have erroneously taken the place where the report was written to be that at which Bem was defeated. My news of this event, however, were derived only from Kossuth.

vania to the Banat had been made : I therefore asked again for an explanation of all this.

Kossuth's earlier statements on the events of the war at Temesvár betrayed clearly enough the twofold tendency—to cheer the spirits of the assembly, depressed in consequence of Nagy-Sándor's retreat, and at the same time to point out Bem as the very man who had been appointed by Providence for the glorious salvation of the fatherland. Now there can be no doubt that it was difficult for the governor to answer my question—who commanded the army in Transylvania in Bem's absence?—seeing there was now no army in Transylvania!—consequently he preferred no longer to conceal that he had already made Bem commander-in-chief.

From the circumstances in which we then were, it had not been difficult for me to foresee that the principal matter in this ministerial consultation would be the choice of a commander-in-chief. Of course Kossuth's communications about the war-events at Temesvár, and the declaration that Bem commanded Dembinski's army while he was present, could not fail to strike me the more, as this circumstance was incapable of explanation otherwise than by the previous appointment of Bem as commander-in-chief. I was consequently justified in suspecting that the convocation of this ministerial council was again merely a mock-show of Kossuth's; that, *without consulting the ministers*, he had long before arbitrarily filled the very post, on the appointment to which, pretended only now about to be made, the assembled council of ministers had to decide. At the moment, however, when Kossuth's communications about the war-events at Temesvár betrayed to me the fact that Bem had already been appointed to the chief command, I was still without any certain proof that I was right in supposing that Bem had really been appointed *without* the previous knowledge of the ministers. It was possible also that the only object of the present consultation might be, on an understanding with the ministers, to make sport of *me alone*.

The sole drift of my repeated request for an explanation of the enigmatical position of Bem and Dembinski, as related to the service, was that I might be certain whether, in this ministerial council, I alone was to be mystified by the whole government *personnel*, or together with me the ministers also by Kossuth alone.

The truth, as we shall soon see, lay between the two : it was by no means all the ministers ; one of them, the minister of communication, Csányi, at least (perhaps even more), was elected with me to be present, as Kossuth's *dupe*, in the consultation about the choice of a commander-in-chief.

Scarcely had Kossuth—compelled thereto by my repeated questions—avowed that he had already appointed Bem commander-in-chief, when Csányi declared this nomination to be contrary to law, because it had not the counter-signature of a minister.

Kossuth replied, that this was not the case, as it *had* been countersigned by a minister, namely, by the war-minister (Aulich).

Csányi retorted, that the war-minister was not justified in doing so, as it could not be unknown to him (Aulich), any more than to the governor himself, that it was not Bem, but *myself*, who had been proposed to the government by the Diet for the post of commander-in-chief, as well as that the president of the ministers, Szemere, had, in the name of the government, given their consent to this proposal of the Diet.

Csányi's latter assertion was now contested by Szemere, who maintained that he had *only* answered, that the government acknowledged the proposal to have been made.

Csányi again remarked, that *this* answer could only be considered by the Diet as assenting ; that the government, after it had given this answer, had merely to choose the *time* for nominating a commander-in-chief ; and that he (Csányi) must consequently persist in his declaration, that Bem's nomination to the chief command was contrary to law.

The other ministers, like myself, did not feel it necessary to take part in this discussion.

Csányi's opinion being no longer contested, the minister of justice, Sabbas von Vukovics, rose and declared that the question, *who* should be intrusted with the chief command of all the troops, was an open one ; the speedy settlement of which, though undeniably urgently demanded, was dependent, in his opinion, on the previous adjustment of certain differences between the provisional government and *myself*. It was, for instance—continued Vukovics, in his declaration—not unknown to the government that most of its steps underwent a caustic criticism in the camp of the army commanded by me, nay mostly in my immediate



vicinity; that in general all the opinions and observations about the provisional government which were made among the officers of the said army seemed to be calculated to degrade the highest civil authority existing in the country as much as possible in the eyes of the army, and to render it by degrees accessible to the idea of a "military despotism," and such like. I had, therefore, first of all to clear myself from the suspicion, that these phenomena hostile to the government, in the ranks of the army commanded by me, were intentionally brought about by me, and that they were the reflex of my political opinions, the signs of my personal endeavors: I had to do this without delay, as he was convinced that the ministerial council then assembled could not proceed unembarrassed to the choice of a commander-in-chief so long as this suspicion rested on me.

I had long ago been aware of the suspicion of the provisional government, that a military despotism was the final aim of my endeavors and those of the army. Kossuth stood at the head of the government, and had himself invented the fable of these endeavors, in order to urge the Diet to the declaration of independence; and it had happened to him with this fable as it usually does to children with the bugbear which they rig up to frighten their comrades, and at which at last they begin to be frightened themselves. I had likewise been for some time past prepared to see start anew into life all kinds of government measures, which, dictated by this suspicion, might aim even at my removal from the army, and its dissolution. The earnest request of the minister of justice, however, that I would clear myself by a *simple declaration* from the suspicion under which I seemed to lie in the eyes of the government, came on me indeed very unexpectedly; for I could not see how, all at once, a *simple declaration* on my part could suffice to accomplish that which, with all my former declarations, so often repeated to Governor Kossuth, I had not succeeded in doing. The intimation of the minister of justice, that the government had become suspicious of me only through those phenomena hostile to it which had been remarked in the army, in the form of caustic criticisms on certain government measures, and so on—this intimation came still more unexpectedly on me; for I could not possibly suppose that the minister of justice had lost all recollection of the radical disagreement, dating only from the beginning of July, between the main army and the govern-

ment—a disagreement which doubtless must have caused the government the greater apprehensions for its continued existence, as its two members most eminent by their position and influence (Kossuth and Szemere) had not the moral capacity to convince the army that they had been induced to cause this disagreement, if probed to the bottom, by any thing else than by the want of resolution to throw down the bridge, as once behind the nation, so now behind their own worthy persons also.

The complaint of the minister of justice about those phenomena in the camp, as well as in the head-quarters of the army under my command, were certainly not unfounded.

Government measures, such as the fasting and crusade sermons against the Russian intervention—the decree to burn down all places which had to be evacuated by us before the enemy—the creation of the chief command Mészáros-Dembinski, and afterward of Dembinski-Mészáros—the official announcement that France had declared war against Austria—the farce (not even original) of deciding on the emancipation of the Jews, and on the equalization of rights for all nationalities, at a time when there remained to the government itself but one single place of refuge in the country, and even that one only for a few days;—these and similar government measures certainly were never favorably judged of by those nearest me.

Neither by Kossuth's peculiar predilection for a *camarilla*, which was calculated sensibly to injure alike his personal and his official authority; nor by the striking contrast between what Kossuth said and what he did; nor by his accessibility to any prater, however extravagant, especially to any tale-telling; nor by his frequently forgetting that though at liberty to be ever under petticoat-government as the father of a family, yet that it was never allowable as the Governor of Hungary; nor by his extraordinary apprehension of any personal danger, and his nevertheless persevering efforts to unite in himself the chief command and the dignity of governor; nor by his insatiable longing for ovations of all kinds and at whatever cost; nor by his method of raising the spirit of the nation—among other means, by fabulous reports about the doings of the army, compared with which its real deeds appeared quite unworthy of mention; nor (speaking now of Szemere) by his programme for a republican government, ridiculous by the side of its political antecedents; nor by his endeavors

to organize the bands of guerrillas, protected and fostered by him, into a kind of thorough-bred republican army, the command over which he had beforehand destined for himself; nor by the artifices employed by the minister of the interior for augmenting these bands of guerrillas to the detriment of the completion of the already existing, though *not* republican army; nor, finally, by his efforts to gain me over for a duumvirate *against* Kossuth; by none of these or similar facts (I must confess) were the officers in the camp and at the head-quarters of the army which I commanded, transported to admire either Kossuth or Szemere. On the contrary, these two persons, especially Szemere, were very often the objects of such remarks as were by no means compatible with the respect due to the bearers of the highest powers of government, and before whom indeed the *nimbus* of authority of the whole staff of the provisional government had by degrees to grow pale; although the names of some of its members were never mentioned by the army, while others of them were, and not without respect.

Nevertheless, in my opinion, the minister of justice was by no means obliged to explain these disrespectful remarks about the two heads of the provisional government, or the unfavorable judgments about such and similar government measures, by the arbitrary supposition, that *I was striving for the military dictatorship*, and that I had originated the phenomena hostile to the government to smooth as much as possible my way to absolute power. The minister of justice, without touching upon the moral worth of my endeavors, might have deduced the origin of these phenomena quite simply and very logically from the differences at Komorn between the main army and the government—even if he were not willing to admit that these unfavorable judgments were *just*, and the disrespectful remarks about Kossuth and Szemere *very striking*. And the minister of justice might still have accused me—if it must be so—directly *on the basis of the differences at Komorn*, of striving for absolute power; whereby he would moreover have had the advantage of being supported by a proved fact (namely, that of my disobedience), and have been spared any tale-telling in sustaining his accusation against me.

But now that the minister of justice preferred a quite imaginary mode of proof to that which was at least apparently a real



one, he led me to suppose that he was much more concerned altogether to ignore the Komorn differences (in which indeed the provisional government had not played an advantageous part) than to sustain his accusation against me. The latter was perhaps also merely a consequence of the irritation of the minister of justice at the contemptuous reception, of which he had probably already been informed, his colleague Szemere had *deservedly* met with at Nyir-Adony in the head-quarters of the army under my command; and in this case I should possibly never have been called upon by the minister of justice, if he had known *how* his colleague had drawn upon himself this reception.

But be this as it may, it was quite impossible for me to discover what *attainable* object the minister of justice had in view, when he asked me so decidedly to weaken by "a simple explanation" the suspicion that I was striving for absolute power.

Convinced that it would be useless to comply with the demand of the minister of justice; convinced that, after all the explanations I had formerly given to the same effect to Kossuth had been unsuccessful, a more favorable fate could not await a repetition of them—I replied, that the government might, if it pleased, speedily place me before a council of war, if there were valid reasons for the suspicion just uttered against me; but that it need not expect I would ever answer to mere calumnies such as those now cited by the minister of justice, and to suspicions deduced from a like kind of rumors. After all, I added, my personal presence at the consultation about to take place relative to the choice of a commander-in-chief seemed to me to be quite improper, since I myself might possibly be among the candidates for this post.

After I had made this declaration, I quitted the ministerial council (the *last* at which I was present in Arad, or elsewhere); and as Nagy-Sándor was no longer harassed by the Austrians in his position before Neu-Arad, I returned forthwith to Alt-Arad to the head-quarters, for the purpose of issuing the dispositions for the nightly preparation for the attack which, as I had declared in the ministerial council, was to be made on the Austrian corps posted opposite our first corps before Neu-Arad, in consequence of Kossuth's communication, that our troops were victorious at Temesvár on the 9th of August.

## CHAPTER LXXVII.

X  
WHEN Szemere and Count Batthyányi orally reported to the government in Arad the way in which they had been endeavoring to enter into negotiations with Russia for peace, they made the remark, that their proceedings had been blamed by me as insufficient.

I was present when they made this report; and as Kossuth desired to know the reason of my censure, I declared before him and the assembled ministers—in the very same spirit as on the occasion of the last conference with Szemere and Count Batthyányi (at Gyapju, on the evening of the 6th of August)—that the government, in its project of entering into negotiations with Russia, ought not to overlook, that it, not Russia, needed a peaceable arrangement, and that consequently it had to make distinct proposals to the Russians, but had not to expect them from the Russians; that, further, it, not Russia, desired to know for certain whether the adversary was generally disposed for pacification; that, finally, it, not Russia, was pressed for time, and therefore must make such tempting proposals to Russia, that even if the Russians should continue silent, it might at least no longer want a definitive answer to the *preliminary question* in the attempts at negotiation. But this preliminary question was just whether Russia had any such intentions as the idea of making peace with that state presupposed. To answer this question, the Gross-Wardein letter of the ministers Szemere and Count Batthyányi, as well as the rough-draught, on the practical value of which these ministers had, at Gyapju, desired to have my judgment, seemed to me to be insufficient. To answer this question definitively and with the speed demanded by present circumstances, I believed it to be necessary that the provisional government should offer to the Czar the crown of Hungary, not disguisedly, as the ministers had done in the above document, but *undisguisedly*.

I well remember that Kossuth assented to this view ; that none of the assembled ministers contested it ; and that while I was still present, a government decision corresponding with it was come to. I also distinctly remember a later oral communication of Kossuth's, in which he said that he had already found a man (neither a member of the army nor of the government, however) who was ready to forward the letter, drawn up in accordance with this government decision, to the Russian commander.

What I at that time thought, and do still think, of the idea of making peace with Russia, if practicable, I have sufficiently explained in Chapter LXXV. There also, however, I blamed the heads of the provisional government, that they had mistaken the impossibility of realizing this idea ; nay, that to the last they had given way to the hope that Russia would not be able to resist the temptation of acquiring the crown of St. Stephen.

I *blame* the heads of the provisional government ; and yet it was *I* who plainly called upon them to send plenipotentiaries to carry on the negotiations which had apparently already been introduced by the letter of Count Rüdiger to me at the head-quarters ; and yet I failed to prevent the ministers Szemere and Count Batthyányi in their well-known activity as the provisional government's negotiators for peace, although I had the power to do so ; nay, in Arad, according to all appearance, it was *my* declaration which brought on that ministerial decision, in consequence of which the provisional government was resolved entirely to unmask itself to Russia.

True I called upon the provisional government to charge itself with the management of negotiations which had apparently been already opened. The motive for this summons, however, was less my hope of any favorable result from these negotiations, than my apprehension of raising Kossuth's distrust in me to the highest degree if I omitted this summons. And I was so much afraid of heightening this distrust, because I unfortunately knew of no single important act of his, called forth by this sentiment against me or the army under my command, which in its results had been advantageous to the national cause.

True I did not hinder Szemere and Count Batthyányi in their efforts to induce the Russian commander to enter into negotiations ; on the contrary, I actually assisted them, and afterward even brought about a government decision, the carrying out of



which would leave nothing more to be desired by the Russians in Hungary. It was, however, not the delusive belief of a pacification with Russia which had determined me thereto.

When Szemere and Count Batthyányi, just after the first conference they had with me at Vámos-Pércs on the 2d of August, busied themselves with the composition of the Gross-Wardein letter, with a zeal which—in consequence of my remark, that if the provisional government desired to negotiate with the Russians, it must at all events take the initiative—seemed not to be justified, only because I had sent in immediate advance of this remark a circumstantial report about the exchange of trumpets which had taken place between the Russians and us, and because from this report the want of foundation for any supposition that the Russians felt inclined for pacification had become self-evident; then I no longer doubted for a moment that Kossuth and Szemere had ceased to expect the salvation of the fatherland from the last efforts of the nation; or from the declaration of war on the part of France against Austria, which had been officially published as a settled point; or from the alliance, ready for completion, as was said, with Janku and Sztratimirovich—but exclusively from a pacification with Russia; and just as little did I doubt that if the efforts of Szemere and Count Batthyányi to induce Russia to make peace should be hindered by me, the nation would forever cling to the delusion that Hungary could assuredly have been saved by these efforts. And this foresight it was, which decided me not to paralyze the activity of these negotiators for peace, but, on the contrary, urgently to recommend to the heads of the provisional government, after I plainly perceived their tenacious clinging to their “last” idea of salvation, the full disclosure of their views with respect to Russia; for I was convinced it then mattered very little whether Kossuth and Szemere committed in politics one prank more or less; but *this* still was of the highest importance, that the nation should once for all get rid of the illusory belief in the strength of the Kossuth-Szemere policy—that Kossuth and Szemere might themselves furnish to it a proof *per absurdum*, that the thought of Hungary being independent of Austria is one that may be left to the gossips, until the realization of the states-congress at Verona, announced to the Diet by Kossuth, as will be remembered, in Debreczin (on the 13th of April, 1849), in which the political physiognomy of Europe was to be changed. But

the idea of making Hungary a republic would still be only a topic for the gossips, even if this congress of Verona should have accomplished its mission to the fullest contentment of Kossuth himself.

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## CHAPTER LXXVIII.

In the evening of the 10th of August, the dispositions for the nocturnal preparation for the attack on the Austrians before Neu-Arad, intended to be made at daybreak on the 11th, were already dispatched to the divers corps, when I received an invitation from Kossuth to repair without delay to a personal conference with him in the fortress.

I went as desired; and found the Governor in the same room which I had left several hours before, that I might not embarrass him and the ministers by my presence in the choice of a commander-in-chief. Now the ministers were gone, and Kossuth was alone. He felt a desire for a *tête-à-tête* with me. I saw him on this occasion most probably for the last time in my life.

My supposition, that Kossuth had sent for me to communicate to me the latest decision of the government respecting the choice of a commander-in-chief, and then perhaps to consult with me about the next warlike operations, soon proved to be erroneous. That I had been chosen commander-in-chief in the ministerial council which had just taken place, I did not learn till I was in Carinthia; and it was no longer the future about which Kossuth began to conjecture during this conference—it was the *past*.

After Kossuth had synoptically recapitulated the really splendid results obtained by his talents and unremitting zeal, without which the defense of the country, even opposed to Austria alone, would have been paralyzed, he maintained that, to drive out of the country at once both the Russians and the Austrians, only one thing had been wanting to him—my confidence! He made mention of the time (the beginning of March, at Tiszafüred) when he had asked me to tell him openly if I wished to possess the highest power in the state; he would in that case create a party for me—that party should be all Hungary. He mentioned at the same

time also the answer I had given him to this inquiry (namely, that he had no rival to fear in me); but said that I had not then been *candid* with him, so that it had been impossible for him to come to an understanding or to unite with me; and that exclusively in consequence of this, Hungary, instead of destroying her enemies, had herself come to the brink of destruction.

Many and multifarious things Kossuth said to the same effect; showing me how much easier it was for him to impute to me the blame of the ruin of the fatherland, than repentantly to confess that he had induced the nation to give up a good right for an idea, to realize which the forces of the nation were insufficient.

The perception of this opened to me the unlucky prospect of having probably to serve in future as the governor's scape-goat. However, from the absurdity of his assertion, that the mere doubt of the sincerity of my assurance that I was not striving for the highest power, had prevented him (to whom, as he himself protested, the crown of might was a crown of thorns) from coming to an understanding with me, from uniting with me, that is, *not* to proclaim the forcible separation of Hungary from Austria—I at the same time indulged the hope that Kossuth (thanks to his peculiar logic) could hardly have failed by this time to take again from me his own proper sins.

I also confined my reply to simply assuring Kossuth, that the negative answer I had given him in the beginning of March, at Tiszafüred to his question, whether I should like to reign in his stead, *was certainly sincere*, though he had a doubt of it; and that I was of opinion, the cause of Hungary would scarcely have fallen so low, if in the consideration of my counsels for maintaining the just rights of the nation he had not allowed himself to be perplexed by his unfounded doubts of my sincerity.

When Kossuth began to speak of the gigantic results of his public activity, of the obstacles that had prevented us from conquering the allied troops—in a word, of the past, I suspected that he had determined to speak also of the Komorn differences between us. However, *before* the conference, he neither seemed to have come to this, nor indeed in general to any determination whatever of importance, except, at most, *to sound me*, whether and what resolutions *I* had already formed as to the immediate future. For after I had briefly answered, as has been mentioned,



his retrospective glance into the past, he put to me in uninterrupted succession the following questions :

Above all things, he desired to know how I should take it if the government were to transfer the chief command to Field-marshal Lieut. Bem.

I assured him that I should consider the nomination at this moment of a non-Hungarian as commander-in-chief to be equivalent to my removal from the command of the army under me, and would immediately retire from my post ; because, in order to take part still further in the war, I needed the guarantee that it would not continue to be carried on, when any *moral* result was no longer to be expected—only for personal, not national interests.

Hereupon Kossuth wished to know what I intended to do, in case the news he had received of the victory of Dembinski's army at Temesvár should be confirmed—the junction of the army under my orders with Dembinski's effected—and the chief command over both armies were to devolve upon *me*.

In that case—I replied—I should combine the whole of our forces, and direct my attack against the Austrians alone.

But if the Austrians have been victorious at Temesvár ? Kossuth finally asked.

Then I will lay down my arms—was my answer.

And I shoot myself!—replied Kossuth.

I took this in earnest, and began to dissuade him from the desperate idea. I spoke of the possibility there was of his being still useful to the nation even abroad. I urgently recommended him to prefer flight to suicide. Nay, I endeavored to show him that the preservation of his life was a patriotic duty. And this it really was ; but in *what* sense it was so, Kossuth seemed to have no perception.

It was Kossuth's patriotic duty to recant his political doctrine of the 14th of April, 1849 ; for he could not invalidate the principle derived from experience, that nations as well as individuals lose themselves when the object after which they strive is an unattainable one. Now the object which Kossuth on the 14th of April had set before the nation, he could not possibly any longer call an attainable one, after he had himself put beyond doubt that Europe was in fact not for, but *against* the revolt of Hungary from Austria.

But that Hungary *alone* would be able to maintain itself against Austria *and* Russia, this Kossuth himself had *never* believed.

A proof of this was the strenuous efforts he began immediately after the 14th of April, and regularly continued, to deceive the nation in respect of the danger threatening it from Russia ; efforts which succeeded so well, that, among others, even Field-marshal Lieut. Bem yielded to this *délusion*, and lost the mountain defiles of Transylvania before he had even an idea of their being seriously menaced.

A proof of this was Kossuth's parading—carried so far as officially to blind the nation—of the immense influence which he pretended he could exercise upon foreign policy against Russia and Austria ; the result of which influence for Hungary, however, with all its immenseness, was not to be victory over Russia and Austria, but (according to Kossuth's own assertion) only a peace based on *freedom*—an *honorable* peace, though purchased with *sacrifices*.

Consequently, even with the assistance of the expected intervention of the “west” of Europe, *not* victory over Russia and Austria, but merely a peace bought with *sacrifices*, which could only be *the honor and freedom of the nation!* (or what else could it be ? perhaps Kossuth notes ?)

And was it ever really believed by Kossuth that “his people” was strong enough to vanquish the Russians as well as the Austrians ?

Kossuth, in fact, had not even to deny a conviction in order—mindful of the last patriotic duty which it was still in his power to perform—to recant his doctrine of the 14th of April, 1849.

That he would nevertheless fail to fulfill this duty knowingly and intentionally, I did not for a moment doubt. But he might fulfill it *without* knowing it and *without* intending it, by sparing his own life, by early taking heed to its safety.

Hence my earnest endeavors to dissuade him from the desperate idea of suicide, and to induce him to flee ; for I feared that the nation would scarcely resist the certain temptation forthwith to consider Kossuth's death (even by his own hand) as setting the seal to that doctrine, from which the nation must necessarily turn away, unless it had a mind to share the very fate of those whose efforts were directed to an unattainable object.

The consolation that my endeavors were successful—if not superfluous—must, however, be withheld from me for some time yet. Kossuth seemed not to be willing to accede to any of my representations respecting the preservation of his life, as well as its safety by flight. Soon afterward he dismissed me, without communicating to me the desired change in his desperate project.

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Before midnight I had returned again from the fortress to the head-quarters in Alt-Arad.

A few hours later, Kossuth sent for my information a report of General Count Guyon relative to the issue of the battle fought on the 9th of August at Temesvár by Dembinski's army with the Austrians.

According to the language of this report, written by Count Guyon himself, Dembinski's army no longer existed.

By this final result of Dembinski's retrograde operation from Szöreg to Temesvár (instead of to Arad) the last probability of a successful offensive against the Austrians was destroyed.

The further continuance of our active resistance to the armies of the allies could now at most promote personal, no longer any national interests.

Therefore, directly after the receipt of Count Guyon's report to Kossuth, I resolved, with the army under my command, which had been strengthened in Arad by a division of reserve, to lay down our arms, that an unbloody end might be put as speedily as possible to a contest henceforth without purpose, and that the country, which I could no longer save, might at least be freed from the horrible misery of war.

I took this resolution with the full conviction of performing no *half* deed in executing it: for the army under my command was now the *principal* army of Hungary, and *its* conduct must prospectively the more certainly become the guide for all the isolated lesser bodies of active forces still existing elsewhere in the country, not excepting the garrisons of the fortresses; as Kossuth himself agreed with my resolution to lay down our arms, and there was consequently no reason to apprehend that he would agitate against a general imitation of the example I was determined to set.

My supposition that Kossuth would agree to the laying down of our arms was by no means an arbitrary one.



At the moment when I explained to Kossuth that I was determined to lay down our arms as soon as the news which I had received about the defeat of Dembinski's army was confirmed, he was in the strictest sense of the word *master of my life*. The interview at which I made this declaration took place, as is known, in his own apartment in the fortress of Arad. The commander of the fortress was Damjanics. Since the Komorn differences he was among my decided adversaries. The garrison of the fortress consisted of troops that scarcely knew me by name. There could not exist the slightest sympathy on the part of these troops for my person. The suite with which I had hastened on Kossuth's summons into the fortress consisted of one adjutant. Kossuth nevertheless allowed me unobstructed to return from the fortress to the head-quarters in Alt-Arad. He had not even attempted to dissuade me in any way from the eventual resolution of laying down our arms. It is true he had declared he was resolved to shoot himself, if I laid down our arms. This declaration, however, considering the little personal sympathy I had shown him since the 14th of April, 1849, could not be expected to shake me in my resolution; I considered this pathetic declaration, rather, only as a natural consequence of Kossuth's repeated asseverations, that he could neither live out of Hungary nor in it, if it sunk into slavery.

If Kossuth had been decidedly opposed to the laying down of our arms, he could not possibly have allowed me to quit the fortress of Arad.

The circumstance, however, that Kossuth did not combat my resolution to lay down our arms either by adducing reasons against it, or otherwise, proved no *more* than that he might have been already convinced, during our interview, of the impossibility of saving the fatherland. And the fact of my unendangered return from the fortress of Arad to the head-quarters in Alt-Arad served likewise, strictly considered, merely to prove that Kossuth perhaps foresaw that by removing my person he would at most have brought on something even worse than the laying down of our arms, resolved upon by me in the event of the defeat of Dembinski's army.

But Kossuth knew of my intention, at daybreak of the 11th of August to attack the Austrian corps before Neu-Arad; I had plainly and distinctly declared this intention in the ministerial council assembled in the forenoon of the 10th; during our interview

(which took place immediately after this ministerial council, late in the evening of the same day) I had already informed Kossuth of the dispositions issued for the intended attack; further, the governor—after my decided declaration, in case the defeat of Dembinski's army should be confirmed—could not possibly be in doubt that I intended to undertake the attack on the Austrians at Neu-Arad only if in the course of the night I should receive from Dembinski's army either an authentic *favorable* report or *no authentic news whatever*. And nevertheless Kossuth, a few hours before daybreak of the 11th, sent me, for my information, Count Guyon's report *unsealed*, consequently evidently after he had read it.

If Kossuth had been for the continuation of the combat, and not for the laying down of our arms, he must have kept secret the contents of this report. Least of all would he have communicated it to *me*.

Having nevertheless done the latter, and moreover without adding to the report—the original of which he sent me—a single word with his own hand dissuading me from the surrender, or even charging the bearer of the dispatch to do so—I should necessarily have been obliged to get from the clouds, if not the assumption that Kossuth was *for* the surrender of arms, yet certainly the inference that he was *against* it.

Nevertheless I could not possibly suppose in Kossuth an inclination to take a personal part in the laying down of our arms, in the face of his intended suicide, which he had disclosed to me. And as it was of course important for me to avoid even the appearance of the resolution to surrender being one of treachery to the country, an act of rebellion against the highest authority in the state, I addressed a written invitation to the Governor formally to resign and transfer to *me* the supreme power.

I took this step in the expectation that Kossuth would not overlook, that though as far as he personally was concerned, it was all one whether he committed suicide as Governor of Hungary or as a simple private individual, yet that it was not the same as regarded the tendency of the laying down of our arms.

But instead of resigning, Kossuth acted as if he had not received my invitation at all, and sent me an official letter signed by himself as Governor and with a ministerial counter-signature, according to which the provisional government definitively trans-

ferred to me the chief command over all the troops of the country, and moreover unlimited power to conclude a peace—but only with the Russians.

Immediately after the receipt of this decree, which under the then existing circumstances was utterly worthless, I went to the minister of communications, Csányi. I had already previously informed him of my resolution to lay down our arms, and call upon Kossuth to resign, and transfer the supreme power to me. Csányi approved of the motives of these resolutions. I now requested him to show to the Governor how absurd it was to appoint me commander-in-chief of all the troops at a moment when the forces which had hitherto been at my disposal were not increased a single man by this nomination; and how much more absurd it was, moreover, to empower me to conclude a peace with the Russians, when we were in a situation destitute of even the *fundamental condition* for entering into negotiations about peace—the possibility of a further successful resistance. I also requested him to represent to the Governor, that it would be much less prejudicial to his personal dignity, if, convinced of the impossibility of being useful to the nation in his present position, he resigned it freely, than if he exposed himself to the danger of a public humiliation by foolishly wishing to retain the appearance of a power, the reality of which had already been destroyed in consequence of the enemy's victories.

Csányi promised to exert all his influence to induce Kossuth, together with the ministers, voluntarily to resign. And he kept his word; for early in the afternoon of the 11th of August the deed of resignation, signed by Kossuth and the majority of the ministers, was in my possession.

The transmission of the supreme power to my person was clearly and distinctly expressed in this document: I was not to take the place of the provisional government, however, till the evening of the same day. This precautionary measure of Kossuth's—by the way, just as unworthy as superfluous—seemed to indicate either that he had not at all needed my representations of the preceding evening during the well-known interview (to spare his own life, and, above all, to take early steps for his safety from the enemy), or at least that he had not been insensible to them.

Kossuth speedily confirmed this indication: an officer, whom



I had dispatched to him, soon after receiving the deed of resignation, to take possession of the insignia of the state, returned without accomplishing his mission, and reported that the Governor had already taken his departure.

I know nothing of the fate of the insignia of the state afterward.

Before evening of the 11th of August, the resignation of the provisional government, and the union of the supreme civil and military power in my person, was made known to the public by the two following proclamations, which I give in a German translation.

“TO THE NATION.

“After the defeats that have lately befallen the nation, all hope is at an end of our being able any longer to continue with success the combat in self-defense against the allied powers of Russia and Austria.

“In such circumstances, the preservation of the national existence and the guarantee for its future is now solely to be expected from the leader at the head of the army; and, as I am thoroughly convinced, the further continuance of the present government is not only useless, but even prejudicial to the nation. I accordingly inform the nation, that, moved by that pure patriotic feeling which has led me to consecrate all my efforts, my whole life, exclusively to the fatherland—in my own name, as well as that of the ministry, I hereby resign; and transfer the supreme civil and military power to General Arthur Görgei, until the nation, in virtue of its right, shall enact otherwise.

“I expect from him—and I hold him responsible for it before God, the nation, and history—that he will use this power, according to his best ability, for the salvation of the national existence of our fatherland, for its welfare, and for guaranteeing its future.

“May he love his fatherland as disinterestedly as I have loved it; and may he be more fortunate than I have been in securing the prosperity of the nation!

“By actions I can no longer be useful to my fatherland. Could my death avail for its well-being, joyfully would I sacrifice my life.

“May the God of clemency and justice be with the nation!

“LOUIS KOSSUTH, Governor.

SABBAŠ VUKÓVICS, Minister of Justice.

LADISLAUS CSANYI, Minister of Communications and Public Works.

MICHAEL HORVATH, Minister of Public Instruction.

“FORTRESS OF ARAD, August 11th, 1849.”

“CITIZENS!

“The provisional government of Hungary no longer exists.

“The Governor and the ministers have to-day voluntarily resigned their offices.

"Forced by this circumstance, besides the military chief command, I have to-day provisionally assumed the civil power also.

"Citizens! All that can be done for the fatherland in our difficult position, I shall do, whether it be by arms or peaceably, as necessity shall dictate; at all events, in such a manner as to diminish the sacrifices which have already been so great, and put an end to persecution, cruelty, and murder.

"Citizens! The events are extraordinary, and the blows of misfortune have fallen heavy upon us. In such a position it is impossible to calculate beforehand. My advice and wish is, that you return peaceably to your dwellings; and even if the enemy takes possession of your town, offer no resistance, nor otherwise take part in the combat: for the security of your persons as well as of your property is most probably dependent upon your remaining quietly in your own homes, engaged in peaceful occupations.

"Citizens! That which God's inscrutable decrees have destined for us, we shall bear with manly resolution, and in the hope, founded on our own conviction, that a just cause can not always be lost!

"Citizens! God be with us!

(*My signature follows.*)

"ARAD, the 11th of August, 1849."

In the first sentence of his farewell proclamation Kossuth declares that every hope of continuing any longer with success the struggle in self-defense against the allied powers is at an end. Nevertheless he declares immediately afterward, in the next sentence, that under such circumstances it was still possible to save the existence of the nation, nay even to secure its future. The "*how*" Kossuth conceals from the nation. He informs it only "*by whom*," namely, by the leader who stands at the head of the army.

The army, however, which Kossuth in all reason must have meant, was in fact no other than that which had hitherto been commanded by me. The Transylvanian army, according to Kossuth's own assertion, and the Dembinski or Banat army, according to Count Guyon's report, recognized as authentic by Kossuth himself, had both already ceased to exist.

By this army alone—greatly exhausted as it was by the forced retreat from Komorn to Arad (about 80 German miles), and by the battles and encounters which had taken place during it—the fatherland was now speedily to be reconquered, after three armies had not been able to maintain it.

But no—not from the army, only from the leader at its head, Kossuth expects, and even from him not the reconquest of the

fatherland, but only the preservation of its existence as a state ; but for this he is made responsible by Kossuth before God, the nation, and history, the more certainly as Kossuth transfers to this leader at the same time the power in the state intrusted to himself and to the ministers—after every hope of continuing any longer the contest in national self-defense against the allied powers had already been destroyed.

Kossuth may have had his particular reasons for leaving the nation in the dark about the “how” of its salvation to be expected from me (the leader at the head of the army). We can not, however, suppose that he himself was in the dark about this “how,” without rendering him suspected of having wished to mask by the proclamation in question merely the real motive (were it so ?) of his resignation and flight—namely, his inmost conviction that the nation in fact was no longer to be saved by any means, not even by his death.

But however probable this supposition, and however strikingly the tendency of Kossuth’s proclamation, derived from it in like manner, harmonizes with the necessity felt by him, and which had before then been repeatedly evident, always to find excuses for himself—we should nevertheless expose ourselves to the deserved reproach of hostility to Kossuth, if we gave way to this supposition—that he was himself in the dark about the “how” it was possible *still* to save Hungary—without having previously made use of all the facts known to us, by means of which this supposition might possibly be shown to be erroneous.

And some such facts are certainly known to us. Kossuth had formed and carried out the resolution of entering into negotiations for peace with the Russians. Further, he had resolved, on the 9th or 10th of August, to offer *quite undisguisedly* the crown of Hungary to the dynasty of Romanow. He had done for the execution of this resolution as much as time and circumstances permitted him. For this purpose a letter to the Russian commander had been drawn up by himself, if I mistake not, or he had caused it to be drawn up (probably by the president of the ministers Szemere, already practiced in this department). He had personally endeavored—and, as he assured me, not without success—to find some one to forward the letter to the Russian camp.

With a matter, on the success of which no hopes are dependent, it is not usual to occupy oneself so zealously.



Kossuth *believed*, consequently, at the moment in which he wrote his farewell proclamation, in the possibility of saving the fatherland by negotiations for peace with Russia.

Herein, at the same time, lies the key for understanding this proclamation, which without it would have no meaning at all. For only in the firm belief of the possibility of concluding peace with Russia, could Kossuth speak in one and the same proclamation of the unsuccessful further combat and the possible salvation of the fatherland.

That Kossuth, even after I had called upon him to resign, still entertained this belief, is shown by the full powers to conclude a peace which he gave me, as an evasive answer, as it were, to my invitation to him to resign. The resignation which nevertheless afterward took place, does by no means prove that Kossuth had seen the absurdity of his belief in consequence of the representations which I had requested Csányi to make to him. Csányi had not promised me to communicate to the governor *my* views about the value of the said full powers: his promise was merely, that he would do all he could to induce Kossuth and the ministers to resign voluntarily. *How* he accomplished it, we do not know. In view of the tendency of the surrender of arms, on which I had resolved, and in view of Kossuth's most probable disinclination to sanction this tendency by his personal participation in the act of surrendering, Csányi—perceiving from the national point of view the moral necessity for the resignation of Kossuth and the ministers—might possibly not have hesitated to make use of such means to induce Kossuth to resign, as were quite contrary to those I had proposed. However little he may himself have been deceived as to the futility of the idea of saving the political existence of Hungary by means of concluding peace with Russia, Csányi, aware of Kossuth's spasmodic clinging to this idea, might, in this case, have urged on him (to induce him to resign) just the said idea, and represented to him that the Russian commander would hardly be inclined to negotiate with him (Kossuth), though probably he might with me—(in favor of which was the fact, that the diplomatic dispatches of Szemere and Count Batthyányi had been forwarded to the Russian camp exclusively under my name). Consequently the process of Kossuth's voluntary resignation might perhaps have been as follows:

Kossuth *believed* in the possibility of concluding a peace with

the Russians at the expense of the Austrians, and thereby of saving the political existence of Hungary, nay, of securing its future. In like manner he believed that the Russians would negotiate only with me—not with him. But Kossuth might have suspected that, in the treaty to be concluded, I intended to take care of the interests of the army only, not of those also of the whole nation, of the state. (My declaration, that I was determined to lay down our arms, Kossuth, from the moment when I called upon him to resign, might have taken merely for what I should have taken his declaration, that in that case he would shoot himself, if I had known then what I know now, namely, that his repeated asseverations—that he could neither live in nor out of Hungary if it was reduced to slavery—were never seriously meant.) Kossuth consequently considered it to be his patriotic duty to ignore my invitation (to him to resign), and to dismiss me merely with the dignity of commander-in-chief, and full powers to conclude a peace. So long as he still stood at the head of the government, I should scarcely dare (so he might have hoped) to conclude a treaty with the Russians, which would expose the nation. After some hours' reflection, however, he might have perceived, that his continuing to retain the dignity of governor was the very thing that would render it impossible for me to come to any other treaty with the Russians than one which had regard to the interests of the army alone; because so long as *he* held the state-rudder, I could act in the negotiations for peace neither as dictator of Hungary, nor as representative of the provisional government (with which the Russians would have nothing to do), but solely as general-in-chief. But the perception of this must assuredly have the rather determined him *formally* to resign, as by this act he incidentally acquired the right to render *me* responsible for the salvation of the fatherland—before God, the nation, and history.

Now if we compare this process of the development of Kossuth's voluntary resignation with the contents of his farewell proclamation, we cannot without injustice withhold from him (viewed from Kossuth's position) the acknowledgment that it appears by no means to be, what it might be taken for at a *first* glance—namely, an intentional mystification of the public.

But when, in order to save the honor of this proclamation, we cast a *second* glance, beyond its limits, upon the facts which

had preceded it, and from which it as it were originated, we simultaneously conceded to our opponents the right to cast yet a *third* (controlling) glance upon the facts which followed, and which contradict the consequences developed from the facts that preceded, thus endangering anew the scarcely saved honor of this proclamation.

Our opponents, namely, can maintain—and, alas, consistently—that Kossuth, in case he had resigned only in order to render possible the salvation of the country through me, that is, to enable me to conclude a peace with Russia at the expense of Austria—a peace which was not only momentarily to save the political existence of Hungary, but also to guarantee it for the future—that Kossuth in this case ought to have likewise enabled me to *buy* this peace, there being no longer any hope (as Kossuth himself avows in the first sentence of his proclamation) of *gaining it by fighting*; consequently that Kossuth, well aware that I had to offer to the Russians for the saving peace, besides the army and my own person and some Kossuth notes, absolutely nothing as purchase-money, not a foot-breadth of ground which the Russians or Austrians either did not already possess, or could not take possession of within a very short time, in the face of the uselessness of our further resistance, confirmed by Kossuth himself (in his proclamation); that Kossuth, knowing all this quite well, ought to have placed at my disposal at least *that* by means of which he himself intended to buy the peace (in case the Russians had negotiated with him)—namely, the insignia of the state; that he ought the less to have withheld these from me, as he himself labored under the general illusion, that the enemies of the fatherland would negotiate only with me, because the army under my command had exclusively recognized only the constitution of the year 1848, sanctioned by King Ferdinand V., never the *coup d'état* of the 14th of April, 1849—consequently that Kossuth, from the point of view of this illusion, could not possibly deny that the delivery of the insignia of the constitutional kingdom of Hungary would very probably be the object of the principal reciprocal condition to be made on the part of the enemy.

Now from the single fact, that Kossuth had *not* delivered the insignia of the state, our opponents might certainly deduce the fatal conclusion, that the object of his voluntary resignation was quite other than to render possible the effecting of a saving peace



with Russia; consequently that Kossuth's farewell proclamation was no *more* than a mask for the *real* motive of the voluntary resignation, a last official blinding of the nation.

This conclusion, in spite of its undeniable consecutiveness, may nevertheless be weakened by simply referring to those dangers by which Kossuth might have seen himself threatened, to the endangering of his life, on the 11th of August. If we recall first of all Kossuth and his partisans' notorious apprehensions that *I* was mischievously plotting against his life—apprehensions which must have excited the more terror, as they were connected with the fact that I had once studied *chemistry*; if we further recall the proximity of an Austrian corps to the fortress of Arad, where Kossuth then sojourned; and finally, Kossuth's very probable apprehension, after Count Guyon's report, of next day, perhaps, seeing the way to Turkey (from Arad by Lippa and Lugos) blocked up by Austrian expeditionary columns;—we shall accuse our opponents, if not of positive wrong, at least of the highest injustice toward Kossuth, if they do not admit that though these threatening dangers did not shake his patriotic resolution to deliver up to me, with the highest power, the insignia of the state also, yet that they might nevertheless have prevented him in some measure from executing it; according to which, the retention of the insignia of the state would be to be considered by no means as premeditated, but only as *accidental*—merely an oversight, as it were, and explicable from the haste with which Kossuth had effected his departure from Arad. And we can maintain this with the greater positiveness, as we calculate confidently on finding in Kossuth himself our surety for the correctness of this assertion. But we must be very cautious (and advise Kossuth to be the same)—perhaps from too anxious solicitude for the honor of the farewell proclamation—not to render more *sharply* prominent the bewildering influence of these threatening dangers (no matter whether imaginary or real) on Kossuth's actions of the 11th of August than is just necessary to excuse the non-delivery of the insignia of the state. For in that case we ourselves should furnish to our opponents the most dangerous weapons against us; we should enable them, namely, fully to establish *the* assertion, that Kossuth, after all, had intended to save by the voluntary resignation only his life, and by the farewell proclamation only his popularity:—by the voluntary resig-

nation, his life—for he feared I should hinder his flight so long as he was still governor; by the farewell proclamation, his popularity, which seemed to him to be endangered by the *voluntary* resignation: the nation might suspect him of having voluntarily resigned from cowardice; he must prevent the suspicion of the nation, by assuring it that he did it from patriotism.

And our opponents would then, alas, be supported by the accordance of this assertion with the character of the farewell proclamation. For the latter was, in any case, a blind; although, according to our opinion above expressed of its origin, possibly an unintentional one.

This proclamation was a blind; not, perhaps, because Kossuth therein made a parade of his patriotic sentiments, but because he held out to the nation a prospect of deliverance still—of something impossible under the then existing circumstances.

We have already mentioned from what idea Kossuth must have set out in order to venture this. It only remains to investigate *why* this idea (that I should conclude a saving peace with Russia) was an *untenable* one.

Kossuth, as is known, believed that it was not possible for him, but only for *me* to succeed in making a treaty for peace with the Russians, because they negotiated only with me, not with him.

Now, in the first place, Kossuth had not a single fact at his command, from which he could come to the conclusion that the Russians would *negotiate* with me.

Such a fact could evidently only have been some negotiation *already entered into with me* on the part of the Russians.

But the Russians had only summoned *me to lay down our arms*; and this is just the opposite of what can reasonably be called *negotiating*. Even the letter of Count Rüdiger, contained in Chapter LXXI., attentively considered, is nothing more than a polite invitation to lay down our arms; not to speak of the circumstance that Count Rüdiger was only a sub-commander of the Russian main army, and that negotiations of any importance must necessarily have come from the commander-in-chief (Prince Paszkiewicz). The exchange of arms, too, was merely a warlike courtesy, followed by no results whatever.

But assuming that Kossuth did nevertheless attribute to these events an importance, from which he believed he was authorized to conclude that the Russians would not hesitate to enter into

negotiations with me, he could not possibly predict, without an optimist ignoring of certain circumstances well known to him, that the benefits of the negotiations, supposed to be opened in earnest between the Russians and myself, would ever be able to extend beyond the limits of *the personal interests of the army*, and become *political*, answering to Kossuth's idea of salvation.

Yet the Russian commander had even hesitated to allow Lieut.-General Sass and Colonel Chrulow to accept my presents, merely because he suspected in them a political demonstration against Austria. Yet the letter of Count Rüdiger (the sole source of those chimeras, which, propagating themselves in Kossuth's fancy, finally gave birth to the fixed idea of saving the state of Hungary under Russian protection) did not contain the least allusion to the political relation of Hungary to Austria; and my answer, which certainly very distinctly treated of this relation, as well as the diplomatic letter of the ministers Szemere and Count Batthyányi, had hitherto remained unanswered.

Kossuth might, however, either have been so in love with his own political doctrine, that it was impossible for him ever to perceive its impracticability;—or after Bem's defeats in Transylvania, Nagy-Sándor's at Debreczin, and Dembinski's at Temesvár; after the constant want of sympathy on the part of Europe; and after the fruitless endeavors of Szemere and Count Batthyányi to negotiate for peace—he might perhaps at last have perceived it. But he had not the necessary strength of mind openly and frankly to announce to the nation (instead of deluding it with newly invented possibilities of salvation) in his farewell proclamation—"It can never be!"

On the other hand, Kossuth, in the face of the above described and to him well known indifference of the Russians to our diplomatic importunities, would scarcely have dared to maintain that the Russians were ready to conclude—not with him indeed, but with *me*—a peace guaranteeing the political existence and the future of Hungary. Kossuth would rather have sought for an explanation of the circumstance that the Russians exchanged trumpets with me, but not with himself or Szemere, neither in an especial sympathy of the Russians for my person, or for the constitutional-monarchical confession of faith of the army I commanded, nor in an antipathy (perhaps instinctive) to his or Szemere's personality, or to the idea of independence or of a republic; but exclusively



in the circumstance that I was only the *commander of the army*; consequently that an exchange of trumpets with me could have only a *purely military*, and by no means that political significance, without which an exchange of trumpets between the Russian army of intervention, hurried hither to *save Austria*, and the heads of the provisional government of Hungary, bent on the *destruction of Austria*, would have been wholly inconceivable. This being evident to him, Kossuth, further, could not possibly have overlooked, that the Russians, from the moment in which I took the *power of the provisional government*, could no longer negotiate with me, any more than with himself or Szemere; and that if they nevertheless should do so, it would most probably be not with the dictator of Hungary, but again only with the *commander of the troops*, and that therefore the benefits of any negotiation (*in spe*) would not extend *beyond the camp of the army*.

Consequently, the idea that I had now to conclude a peace with Russia, saving the political existence of Hungary and guaranteeing its future—although Kossuth did not hesitate to render me responsible for the realization of this idea before God, the nation, and history—had really no higher practical value than perhaps the state-creating idea expressed by Kossuth in the first intoxication of independence (I hope not in full earnest?), completely to clear the Banat of the Serbians and Raizens, to colonize the depopulated tracts of land with Honvéd battalions, and to make the success of this liberal enterprise more speedily possible by simultaneously introducing bigamy.

So that from negotiations between the Russian commander and myself, even if such had already been in progress, Kossuth could not expect any thing for the state of Hungary; nor, as in fact no such negotiations had been commenced, for the troops united under my personal command.

Kossuth might take my assertion, that hitherto no such negotiations had been commenced with the Russian commander, as a pretext for reproaching me that I distorted the facts; and he might at the same time establish the counter-assertion, that sending General Pöltenberg to the Russian camp (with the Gyapju letter of the minister Szemere and Count Batthyányi to the Russian commander) was in itself the commencement of a negotiation. But Kossuth, in order to venture this assertion, must openly ignore the fact that, for the opening of negotiations of any kind

whatever, an inclination *on one side is by no means sufficient*. And if Kossuth had delayed his departure from the fortress of Arad only half an hour longer, he might have modified his much-promising farewell proclamation before it went to the printer, without coming into the least conflict with his conviction ; for scarcely had he left the fortress when General Pöltenberg, returning from the Russian camp, arrived at the head-quarters in Alt-Arad, and handed me the following letter addressed to me :

“ MONSIEUR LE GENERAL—J’ai fait parvenir à la connaissance de Monsieur le Maréchal Prince de Varsovie l’arrivée du Baron Pöltenberg comme parlementaire à mon corps d’armée. Son Altesse me charge de vous informer, Monsieur, que la destination de son armée est uniquement de combattre ; et que si vous désirez traiter de votre soumission à votre souverain légitime, il faut que vous vous adressiez au commandant-en-chef de l’armée autrichienne, qui probablement a les pleins-pouvoirs nécessaires à cet effet.

“ Recevez, Monsieur le Général, l’assurance de ma parfaite considération.

(Signed) “ LE COMTE THEODORE RUDIGER.

“ Artáná, le 28 Juillet,  
9 Août, 1849.

When, in spite of this, many besides Kossuth indulged the suspicion that I was thinking only of the salvation of the army, not of the country’s, and openly showed by this suspicion their belief in the possibility of saving only the troops under my command ; they thereby proved merely their incapacity to judge correctly of the situation in which those forces were placed after the fatal defeat of Dembinski’s army, according to the report of Count Guyon.

The error of those who still thought the salvation of the army possible by negotiating, might have originated in the idea, that, supported by the fortress of Arad, I should have been able to make such an impression on both hostile armies as to force from them humane and honorable terms of capitulation.

The army under my command might certainly be supported by the fortress of Arad, in its rear. The protection of the latter would also first of all have been indispensable ; for the Russian main army threatened from the north, the Austrian from the south.

The consequent pressing necessity of protecting the rear of the army might indeed be quite simply met by stationing it around the fortress. By disposing it in this way, the army would at all events have been unassailable in its rear. A commanding position, by which the enemy should be forced to offer honorable

terms of capitulation, happens, however, to demand besides the state of being unassailable in the rear, the securing likewise of the front by the natural or artificial impediments of the ground, and this to such a degree that a hostile attack would be possible only under very disadvantageous circumstances. But even this condition was still attainable: the army had merely to draw back within the outworks of the fortress (if there was space enough), and here—safe from attack in the rear, covered in front by the ramparts of the outworks—the army, forthwith unmolested, might sing *miserere* after *miserere*, that one or other of the hostile commanders would take pity on it, and (though he should not exactly be pressed to concede honorable terms of capitulation) at least attack it speedily, that it might not finally be driven to the fatal necessity of completely abandoning its commanding position, although supported by the fortress of Arad, *without striking a blow*; of course only—to deliver up its arms for the most necessary sustenance during its captivity, and thereby escape certain starvation.

After the report relative to the fate of Dembinski's army arrived, I was convinced that the army under my command had only to choose between the forcible or voluntary surrender of its arms (in either case unconditionally), and the breaking through into the Turkish territory, which was certainly still possible.

In the latter (and out of Hungary generally), neither I, nor the army, so long as I commanded it, had any thing to seek: for this was a *national* army; and I—myself a Hungarian—felt, as its commander, the obligation to prevent it from taking a step by which it would have denied the Hungarian national character.

Or was it self-delusion, when I believed that the true, inalienable greatness of the nation rested—

On the inmost aversion of the Hungarian to leave his fatherland, even when death from the hand of the executioner awaited him for it at home:

On the sublime courage displayed by the Hungarian in battling with his adverse fate, and—if this avails not—in knowing how to endure unsubdued:

On the manly resignation with which the Hungarian, voluntarily, and with a calm, steadfast gaze, advances to meet what is unavoidable, when perceived to be such.



Was this belief a vain delusion ?

By it I was resolved not even to think of the still possible breaking through into the Turkish territory, much less to prefer a *voluntary* to a forcible surrender of arms.

But the honor of receiving our arms immediately from our hands, I could not possibly, after the intervention of Russia, now adjudge to the Austrians.

The Austrians, in my opinion, had forfeited all claim to this honor long ago—at the moment when they were no longer able to sustain their courage—broken by the April campaign—through their own self-reliance, but only through the hope of Russia's near and saving aid.

Moreover, a resolution on my part to lay down our arms before the Austrians (so long as I had a free choice in the matter) would have been a denial of that principle, to which the army and myself personally were pledged. Not as if I had perceived in Russia a guarantee of the constitutional-monarchical form of government of Hungary : but because I reckoned that the Austrian government was much less such a guarantee ; because I, besides, knew of no fact from which I could have concluded that the violent overthrow of the constitution of Hungary sanctioned by King Ferdinand V. had originated with Russia, and not with Austria.

And in fact the voluntary laying down of our arms, resolved upon by me (certainly on my own responsibility before God, the nation, and history), could—so long as *I* commanded the army have taken place before the Austrians only in one of two cases ; either if they had conquered us without the aid of the Russians, or if the army under my command had expressly wished that this act of surrender should be performed before the Austrians—not before the Russians.

After I had received the document of resignation of the provisional government, and moreover the official report that Kossuth had already decamped, I drew up a letter to Count Rüdiger, which in substance contained the following points :

The announcement that the provisional government of Hungary had resigned, and transferred to me the supreme power ;

The declaration, containing my reasons, that I was ready unconditionally to lay down our arms ;

An appeal to the magnanimity and love of justice of the Czar,

in behalf of the general interests of the nation, and in particular of those officers of the army who had formerly been in the Austrian service—with the exception of my own person ;

The express condition, that the act of surrender should take place only before Russian troops ;

The line of march of the army for the 12th, 13th, and 14th of August (Világos, Boros-Jenő, and Béél), communicated in order that Count Rüdiger might move with his troops between us and the Austrians, so as to separate us from the latter ;

Finally, the remark, that in case this manœuvre should be frustrated by the Austrians, I should retire, repelling the attacks of the latter, on the specified route toward Gross-Wardein, for the purpose of arriving within reach of the Russian army.

The draught of this letter I communicated forthwith, in all its contents, to those generals and superior staff-officers of the army, who, being at that moment off duty, had in the meantime been summoned to the head-quarters to hold a military council ; and called upon the assembly plainly to declare, after having deliberated, whether they, in the name of the army, agreed or not with the forwarding of this letter, and with the consequences of this step. In the latter case, the assembly had immediately to come to a positive decision, to the execution of which I pledged myself beforehand. I did not support my proposal by a single word. I even avoided availing myself of the influence of my personal presence upon the consultation. Immediately after I had communicated to the assembly the contents of the letter, and had addressed to it the above-mentioned invitation, I left the council-chamber.

My proposal was nevertheless determined on, and I was informed of the fact by two delegates of the assembly.

After the expiration of the time up to which Kossuth had reserved to himself the dignity of governor (as already said, this was an hour of the evening—if I mistake not, 8 o'clock of the 11th of August), three trumpets left the head-quarters of Alt-Arad for the purpose of forwarding my letter to Count Rüdiger.

From the simple description of the manner in which my proposal for an unconditional surrender to the Russians was resolved upon by the military council, the reader might be inclined to conclude that I had not, after all, been originally in good earnest about the laying down of our arms in general, as well as in par-

ticular about the performance of this act before Russian troops ; since I pledged myself beforehand to the military council, unasked and without any reservation, to execute any of its possible resolutions, even if by them my proposal should be partially or even wholly set aside, without previously being sure of my object, without having done the least to assure myself of it, without having made use of so many means lying near at hand—as, preliminary agitations, a precautionary sifting of the members of the military council, presiding myself in the council—without employing one of these and similar means, which surely would have been calculated to guarantee the reception of my proposal.

Certainly in the camp of the army under my command no kind of agitation for the laying down of our arms took place, at least I knew nothing of it, unless it was that perhaps Kossuth, Szemere, and Count Batthyányi's evident prepossession in favor of the groundless idea of concluding a peace with Russia, or the efforts made by these men for the realization of this idea, or, after all, even Kossuth's farewell proclamation, might have operated as an indirect agitation for the surrender of arms, although the effect of this could hardly have been considerable, because the credit of these men with the army was not great ; certainly the military council was composed of, or, more correctly, by chance contained not a few select persons, but, without choice, the generals and higher staff-officers of the army who happened to be off duty just then ; and even individuals who no longer belonged to the army under my command, or had never belonged to it, were allowed to take part in the consultation, if only they seemed to be entitled to it by their rank ; certainly I renounced the presidency, nay even my personal presence at the consultation about the proposal made by me. But the non-employment of all these and similar means, ought, if well considered, to furnish an irrefragable proof how much I was in earnest about the laying down of our arms in general, and in particular about the performance of this act before Russian troops exclusively, before the decision of the military council. For, in my opinion, agitations for the laying down of our arms would have served only to demoralize the troops, to render them unfit for repelling, if eventually necessary, Austrian attacks, and, on the contrary, fitter to disperse themselves ; further, in my opinion, with the decision of



a military council composed of a few chosen persons, as well as in general with such a decision taken under the predominating influence of my personal participation in the council, only a *decision* would have been obtained, but its *carrying out* would, with all that, have been doubtful.

That the laying down of our arms should not only be decided on, but that it should also be executed, the military council must be numerous, and formed at hap-hazard, without choice, not a picked one; I must give full liberty of debate on my proposal; I ought even not to embarrass it by my personal presence; least of all ought I to lower myself by delusive agitations, even if I had possessed the moral capacity, which was not the case.

Only thus could I succeed in keeping together the army until the last moment; only thus could I render the military council almost as inaccessible to the suspicion that I wished the laying down of arms in general, or at least the performance of this act before the Russians, for *my personal* interest, as I myself had remained inaccessible to every thought of saving my person from the consequences of my acts. Only thus could the receiving of my motion by the military council be at the same time a guarantee for its execution; for only in bringing it forward neither by means of agitations, nor under the predominating influence of my personal participation in the deliberation, could I rely, in the execution of this determination, upon the voluntary co-operation of all those who had taken part in the decisive debate; but among them were the bravest generals and staff-officers of the army—men without whose heroic renunciation of any attempt to save their lives, the surrender of arms would never have been possible.

My assertion, that these men had completely renounced the preservation of their lives, when they resolved upon the act of surrendering before the Russians, might certainly be vigorously attacked from different sides and with different views.

This assertion, however, is founded on the facts, that I not only did not conceal from the military council—before I left it to decide upon my motion—the contents of the above-communicated indirect answer of the Russian commander to the diplomatic efforts of the ministers Szemere and Count Batthyányi; but, on the contrary, plainly warned it not to expect any results whatever from my appeal to the magnanimity and love of justice

of the Czar, as well as generally, in forming their resolution, not to set out from the illusion, that there was still a prospect for us of the possibility of preservation from Austrian courts-martial under Russian protection. And in consequence of this warning, as well as of the answer of the Russian commander, which left not even the hope that Russia could reserve to itself the part of mediator between Austria and Hungary, my proposal would certainly have been rejected, and at the same time the breaking through into the Turkish territory would have been resolved upon, if the members of the military council had not set less value on their own lives than on the speedy deliverance of their fellow-citizens from the miseries of a hopeless war. The supposition that the military council had declared its accordance with my letter to Count Rüdiger only because it had indulged the hope that the Russians would save us from the Austrian courts-martial, would consequently be quite untenable; would be in fact nothing else than intentionally to create a suspicion.

The military council approved of my letter being sent to the Russian commander, because every single member of the council strongly felt that *the* decision of the moment was, whether, in the last issue, the highest honor which one enemy can give to another enemy should fall to the lot of the Russian or the Austrian *general*; and because not a single member of the council overlooked the circumstance that the *Austrian* general, Baron Haynau, had rendered himself unworthy of this highest honor by the first of his doings in Hungary—the well-known executions at Presburg.

Of the prevalence of any other motive in the decision of the military council in favor of my proposal (to lay down our arms before Russian troops exclusively), I have heard nothing. The motives of a *political* nature, clearly and distinctly expressed in what precedes, which had determined *me* to make this proposal, could not possibly have led to its being received, because I had not communicated these motives either to a member of the council or to any one else, and because I have never subsequently heard any expression, from which I could suppose that one of these motives had been referred to during the deliberation by any body.

On the contrary, it is my settled conviction that I should certainly have failed in my proposal to perform the laying down of

our arms before Russian troops only, if Baron Haynau had known how—like many a one of his sub-commanders—to gain for himself the fame of a humane personal character, which does not sound dishonorably even in the mouth of an enemy.

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## CHAPTER LXXIX.

IMMEDIATELY after I had learned from Count Guyon's report to Governor Kossuth the issue of the battle at Temesvár (consequently before daybreak of the 11th of August), orders to retreat without delay to the right bank of the river were issued to the first and seventh corps, which in consequence of the last dispositions were deployed on the left bank of the Maros. The first corps was charged with the eventual defense of the latter against the Austrian corps which, as is known, had pressed forward, on the preceding day, on the road to Temesvár nearly to Neu-Arad; while the third and seventh corps, together with the division of reserve, encamped in battle-array to the north and northwest of Alt-Arad, on the roads leading to Simánd and Pécska. This disposition originated from the news, on the one hand, that the van-guard of the Russian main army was already posted near Simánd, and on the other, that a strong Austrian corps was approaching from Pécska.

This position of the army remained unchanged during the whole day, and without being attacked by the Austrians. The Russians, as it became afterwards evident, were not near enough to be able to attack us at Alt-Arad during the course of the 11th.

In the night between the 11th and 12th (after our trumpets had left the head-quarters with my letter, spoken of in the preceding chapter, to Count Rüdiger; and General Damjanics moreover, having previously been informed of the impending unconditional surrender of the army, had declared of his own accord, that as commander of the fortress of Arad he would follow the example of the army), the whole army commanded by me moved from the above-indicated position in and around Arad, on the road to Villágos, reached this point early in the morning



of the 12th of August, and encamped near and before this place in battle-array, its front and outposts facing Arad.

Here the whole army remained stationary till late in the morning of the next day

According to the last news, which I had received on the previous day when still in Arad, relative to the movements of the Russian main army, I necessarily supposed it possible, as intimated in my letter to Count Rüdiger, that I should be pursued by Austrian troops on the retreat from Arad toward Béél.

This news was, that not the corps of the van-guard, but only Cossacks (the foremost advanced troops) had approached Simánd, during the day (the 11th of August). And I knew already, from my experience of the use made of the Cossacks, obtained during the retreat from Komorn to Arad, that the nearest considerable force of the Russians may with much probability be assumed to be still two, not seldom even three ordinary days' march from the point where the first divisions of Cossacks emerge alone.

Consequently, from the news, that in the course of the 11th the first divisions of Cossacks had been seen only at Simánd (four miles to the north of Arad), I conjectured that the main body of the Russian corps of the van-guard (the commander of this corps was Count Rüdiger, as General Pöltenberg had reported) could scarcely have crossed the river Körös at Nagy-Zerénd (from three to four miles north of Simánd). This conjecture seemed moreover to be confirmed by the circumstance, that Count Rüdiger—as his letter, which reached me through General Pöltenberg, showed—on the 9th of August was still in Artánd; the distance from Artánd to Nagy-Zerénd being ten miles.

According to this conjecture, which, as I have just shown, was not unfounded, I could not possibly expect that Count Rüdiger would arrive by daylight of the 12th with his corps between Világos and Arad, in order to separate me—as invited to do by my letter—from the Austrians, and thereby prevent any further conflict between the Austrian troops and those commanded by me. I could not expect this, for the simple reason that the distance from Nagy-Zerénd to the road which leads from Arad to Világos is six miles, and that it was an absolute impossibility for Count Rüdiger to pass over this distance with his corps before late in the evening of the 12th, even if he set out

immediately after the receipt of my letter. On the contrary, the advance of an Austrian column from Arad toward Világos in the course of the same day seemed certainly not impossible.

Count Rüdiger, however—what I could not foresee—thought it sufficient for separating us from the Austrians, to send only his foremost advanced troops from Simánd on the road from Világos to Arad. This was done *before* noon of the 12th of August; and immediately afterward appeared the commander of these advanced Russian troops, accompanied by our trumpets, who were just returning to the head-quarters in Világos to inform me of this movement.

So long as I must still be prepared for an attack on the part of the Austrians, it was absolutely necessary—considering my very serious intention to oppose them with the greatest energy—to keep the decision of the Arad military council secret from the troops. This necessity had also been perceived by the council, which had pledged itself for this very reason to leave to me personally to fix the time *when* the real object of our retreat from Arad toward Béél should be communicated to the troops, as well as the act of the communication itself.

The time for informing the troops of the mournful fate which awaited them would certainly have been the moment when the report arrived from our outposts, that a hostile column, descending from the direction of Simánd, was approaching laterally the road from Világos to Arad. The commander of the Russian advanced troops, however, preceding his column, had arrived at the head-quarters at Világos before this report; and, prevented partly by his presence, partly by attending to some pressing military affairs which could not be deferred, I failed to repair to the camp immediately after the receipt of this report from the outposts, and explain in person to the troops the real meaning of the flank-manceuvre of the Russian column. All the corps of the army, alarmed by the approach of this column, had got ready for battle. And now they received without any comment my simple order to abstain in future from all kinds of hostilities. The thought, that treason was going on, was obvious enough to be improved for agitations against my person, or perhaps only against further remaining together, by some declaimers, who would have preferred an aimless flight on their own account, to the fate of being made prisoners of war and its consequences. The result

of this was, that I was surprised, late in the afternoon of the 12th, by a report, that mutiny threatened to break out in the camp.

Determined to prevent this, I immediately repaired to the camp: and the event showed that this report was founded either on exaggeration, or that my personal appearance among the revolted troops must have been sufficient of itself to keep the army obedient to my orders till the laying down of arms was accomplished. For during my presence in the camp I confined myself merely to announcing to the separate army corps, that, perceiving the impossibility of conquering both hostile armies, I had resolved on our voluntary disarming before Russian troops; that I expected obedience, and engaged my life that it would be paid to me in future as it had hitherto; that the surrender was at discretion; that this step nevertheless, in the face of the sad position in which Hungary found itself for the moment, was a patriotic, not a disgraceful one—one endangering our lives certainly; but that I, on whose head the vengeance of the enemy must chiefly alight, did not shrink from this step; and that I was convinced, those who had hitherto followed me with manly courage into the battle, would not now desert me; the others, if dismayed, I should know how, with the assistance of their brave comrades, as formerly to drive into the battle, so now into becoming prisoners; to them—the discouraged—it was further declared, that—exclusively for the purpose of rendering impossible a disgraceful flight—on an understanding with me, the army had been completely surrounded by Russian troops; that this measure had no reference to the brave; they—the brave—I knew beforehand could never be regardless of the honorable duty of voluntarily maintaining military order in the army up to the last moment.

After I had spoken to this effect to the troops, I returned again to the head-quarters; for from their behavior toward me, I was already convinced that the danger of mutiny, even if it had been really on the point of breaking out before my ride into the camp, was now over.

In striking contradiction to the mutinous intrigues which, in consequence of the sudden cessation of hostilities against the Russians, had shown themselves, though only for a little while, in the ranks of the army under my command, whole swarms of fugitives arrived toward evening of the 12th of August at Világos



among others also a detachment of several hundred men (mostly still unarmed recruits), of the presence of which on the right bank of the Maros I had not been at all informed. The leader of this detachment reported to me, that, having been alarmed by the rumor that the Austrians had already occupied Alt-Arad, he had intended about noon to start from Radna by Lippa for Lugos, when an Austrian column suddenly approached on the left bank of the Maros toward Lippa ; whereupon he not only gave up the intended march to Lugos, but immediately burnt down the bridge over the Maros between Radna and Lippa, and again drew back some distance toward Arad. He now really knew not whither he should turn. But among the fugitives, to whom, as to him and to his detachment, the road to Lugos, was now interrupted by the Austrian column, the rumor of my march toward Világos soon spread, and that I had already concluded an advantageous peace with the Russians. This rumor determined him and the whole mass of the fugitives to save themselves at Világos.

What a blind belief the rumor that I had obtained an advantageous peace with the Russians must have found beyond the camp and the head-quarters of the army which I commanded, is evident, above all, from the remarkable circumstance, that among the fugitives who arrived at Világos in the course of the 12th of August were a great number of those officers (mostly from Dembinski's army) who had deserted in the beginning of August.

They were people of an avowedly prudent character. They would certainly have avoided, at any cost, the proximity of the army under my command, if they had entertained the slightest suspicion that the said advantageous peace concluded with the Russian commander was mere fudge. But how could they, as well as many thousands besides, have any presentiment that the solution of all those oracles contained in Kossuth's farewell proclamation, equally enigmatical and much-promising, would be the unconditional surrender of arms ? It must not be said, that they might have deduced it from the proclamation in which I informed the citizens of Alt-Arad of the resignation of the provisional government, as well as of the junction of the highest civil and military power in my person. My proclamation was prose ; Kossuth's, poetry. The public, to whom we both spoke, had no comprehension for the prose of the strict warrior ; for the poetry of the great agitator, on the contrary, a high degree of suscepti-

bility. The public, must not, therefore, be blamed ; it may at most be pitied, that the agitator was not a warrior, the warrior not an agitator ; that consequently their routes must diverge.

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that of all who subsequently arrived at Világos merely with the intention of saving their own worthy persons under Russian protection—when they had learnt the “advantageous conditions for peace”—those only remained with the army, who, being subordinate soldiers, belonged to the ranks, and were obliged to give up all further attempts at flight.

In the category of those whom the absurd rumors had enticed to Világos must, however, *not* be included *those men* who, determined to share the fate of the army, had never left it since it was in Alt-Arad. These were, the ministers Csányi and General Aulich ; the generals not belonging to the active contingent of the army, Kiss, Lahner, Knézich, Schweidel, Gáspár, Török, and Lenkey ; and besides many members of the Diet. Of the latter, almost all—so far as I know—belonged to the peace-party.

On the previous day (the 11th of August)—as has been mentioned—and this before the resignation of the provisional government, I had communicated to the minister Csányi my determination to surrender at discretion. Immediately after the retirement of the provisional government, however, and before the convocation of the decisive military council, a lengthened consultation took place between Csányi and myself upon the questions of an unconditional surrender, or a still further prosecution of the contest. Csányi endeavored to maintain divers possibilities of new success on the battle-field, in order to gain me to a continuance of the struggle ; and he did not give up his endeavors until after I had undisguisedly expressed my conviction that, in our present situation, without war supplies, without money, with the support of the troops dependent exclusively on contributions—even if the possibility of new successful war-operations were admitted—on the one hand, the permanence of them must at all events be denied ; and on the other hand, the *objection* to a combat, to be maintained, against the well-known Wallenstein maxim, in our *own* country, must be plainly seen. It was on this occasion also that Csányi declared, without being asked, that he was determined to remain with the army ; for he felt there was no necessity to save his life, if he could no longer devote it to the service of the fatherland.

General Aulich, like the other generals, had been summoned to take part in the council of war in which the sending of my letter to Count Rüdiger was approved.

The above-mentioned members of the Diet, finally, had joined, as it appeared, properly the minister Csányi direct. Disquieted by the thought that they had taken this step perhaps in the vain expectation of finding in the Russian camp protection from the persecutions of Austria, I applied to Csányi, for the purpose of learning something certain on this point. This I did at Világos on the 12th of August. And Csányi assured me, he had communicated to his companions, while still in Alt-Arad, that our surrender would be at discretion. Several of them thereupon were undecided whether they should remain or flee; the greater number, however, without hesitation declared that they were determined *not* to avoid the fate which awaited them in the fatherland; they only wished for the present to remain with the army, until the enemy should have disposed of their persons. The undecided, however, he had himself advised to flee; but he was sorry he had done so—for they, very probably hurt thereby, now declared that they also would persevere, like himself and the others; though he feared that this victory of their sense of national honor over the instinct of self-preservation was not a lasting one, that their courage to die would not remain unshaken; and in his opinion all to whom there seemed at this moment to be a moral necessity voluntarily to face death for their belief in the justice of the cause of the fatherland—before they took the decisive step, ought to examine themselves conscientiously, lest their strength should desert them, when it might be necessary *not* to deny their belief in the face of sneering enemies, nay even at the place of execution. And those who felt themselves not fully adequate to this trial ought to recognize flight as their nearest patriotic duty; that the nation might not endure the disgrace of having to blush for the pusillanimity of those men on whom it once relied as on a rock.

Let the reader take into consideration with due earnestness the facts of the two conferences held at Arad between Csányi and myself, upon the necessity of an unconditional surrender, undeniable in a purely patriotic point of view—the summoning of Aulich and other generals to the decisive military council—Csányi's frank behavior toward his companions; and he will be obliged



unreservedly to assent to my assertion, that those ministers, those generals, and those members of the Diet, who of their own accord joined the army in Alt-Arad, can by no means be included in the category of those, who, as we have seen, enticed by the absurd rumor that I had concluded an advantageous peace with the Russians, suddenly emerged, late in the course of the 12th of August, at Világos, and speedily undeceived, just as suddenly disappeared again.

The minister of finance, Duschek, whose participation in the contest of Hungary against Austria—as Kossuth himself assured me—was not a voluntary one, was at Lugos at the time of my arrival at Arad (on the 9th of August), for the purpose of setting the bank-note presses again to work. This, however, in consequence of the defeat of Dembinski's army at Temesvár, had become impracticable. The presses were therefore brought from Lugos to Arad. The order to do this was issued by Kossuth. The minister of finance consequently arrived in person at Arad on the 11th of August, but not till the provisional government had resigned. At least I do not remember to have spoken with him there before this time. I gave him an order, in the course of the following day (12th of August), immediately to convey to Világos the whole store of the public treasury in gold and silver, as well in bars as in coin, together with the still existing state-notes; and—not convinced of his willingness to obey my orders—I appointed two officers by his side, with authority to oblige him to the punctual execution of my order, by employing even coercive measures, according to circumstances. Thus the money in the public treasury was at my disposal. I had it distributed among the army, that it might receive at least in part the pay which had been due to it for several weeks. The coin found remaining in the public treasury was unfortunately not sufficient to pay them in full. The bars of precious metals in store, however, I gave in charge to the minister of finance, and left him to choose between conveying them to the Russians or to the Austrians. He resolved upon the latter.

Besides the minister of finance, the staff-officers of hussars, Colonel Zambelli and Lieut.-Colonel Markovich also, as I know, declared themselves in favor of surrender to the *Austrians*. This, however, I only learned accidentally, in consequence of a violent discussion, which took place at Világos on the 12th of

August, between these two staff-officers and some of their comrades. I saw myself, however, obliged thereby to inform them, in the presence of the generals and staff-officers of the army, that I expected the resolution of the military council of Arad to be respected as the last unchangeable decision upon the fate of the army; that since the moment when my letter to Count Rüdiger left the head-quarters at Alt-Arad, I considered the execution of this determination to be the army's honorable duty; I had consequently to prevent the subsequent discussion of the question, whether with the Russians or with the Austrians there was more prospect of escaping with a whole skin, as incompatible with the honor of the army; that to this end I proposed to them to leave the army instantly, and surrender themselves to the nearest Austrian outposts; that I called upon them the more decidedly to do this, as it was quite impossible for me to hold out to them the least prospect, except of a not brutal treatment on the part of the Russians, whereby those expectations could be compensated which they seemed to attach to the performance of the act of surrendering before the Austrians. They preferred, however, to remain with the army, and not again to discuss the questionable expediency of executing the laying down of our arms before the Austrians.

In the just-mentioned last assembly of the generals and staff-officers of the army I had purposely undisguisedly repeated my conviction, that the most we might expect from the Russians was a less brutal treatment than from the Austrians, but nothing else, namely, no kind of protection from the vengeance of Austria—for the purpose of preventing the optimist self-delusions, in which a part of the officers in the army—it is true, in consequence of a quite peculiar inducement thereto—began to indulge already on the 12th of August at Világos.

This inducement was furnished by an invitation of Count Rüdiger, which reached me on the same day, to inform him of the most urgent requests of the army, as he was ready to intercede with his chief to gain attention for them; and the conjectures of some of the officers relative to the bearing of this invitation mounted so high as to assume that there was now a possibility of forthwith passing over into the Russian service.

Several subaltern officers even requested to be advanced to a higher rank before the laying down of arms, because, as they

thought, this higher rank in our army would secure to them a proportionately higher one in the Russian army. I represented to them, how unworthy it was to think of entering into the Russian army, in the face of the loss of the cause of the fatherland being just the direct consequence of the Russian intervention. They seemed, however, not so much affected by my representations relative to the unworthiness of their request, as, on the contrary, to be inconsolable that I so decidedly refused them the latter. And, in fact, they and their sympathizers did not allow themselves to be at all disturbed by the severe censure, which, agreeing with me, the bravest generals and staff-officers of the army expressed at every opportunity about their thinking on Russian service. Based on the thesis, certainly indisputable, that "one may ask any thing," and without caring about thereby losing the esteem of his companions in arms, many a one persisted, that the request to permit those who wished to enter Russian service should be comprehended in the specification of the army's requests which was to be delivered to Count Rüdiger.

I did not consider that the philanthropic offer of Count Rüdiger to obtain attention from his chief to the most urgent requests of our army was insincere: any hope of a favorable result from his efforts, I must, however, unfortunately renounce; for the Russian commander-in-chief, in his answer to the diplomatic letter of Szemere and Count Batthyányi (see Chapter LXXVIII.), had not at all left me in the dark as to the extent of his task respecting us; and to attend to even the most natural wishes of the army under my command would not be a warlike but a political act—lay therefore beyond the limits which, according to the assertion of the Russian General himself, were prescribed to him.

Consequently, on the 12th of August at Világos, our future, in spite of this philanthropic offer on the part of the Russian officer, appeared to me not less comfortless than on the previous day at Arad; and in fact I had continually to remind myself of the duty, unmistakable if viewed from the point of national honor, of maintaining the discipline of the army till the last moment of its existence; that I might not be overcome by the anxious apprehension, that the delivery of my own person to save the lives of my subordinates might nevertheless hardly suffice, and be induced forthwith to admonish all the generals and superior staff-officers of the army to take to flight. In the case of some of them—those,



namely, who in the fall of Hungary happened not to have to lament that of their country—I thought, however, that I ought not to abstain from this invitation: I ventured it—but in vain! To the thought of forestalling the forcible separation from his friends and companions in arms, for the sake of his own safety, no one of them all was accessible.

The forcible separation, however, was near at hand, and urged us—my friends and comrades as well as myself—on the evening preceding the accomplishment of the fate we had chosen for ourselves, to the solemn exchange of a last encouraging “God be with thee!”

In the night between the 12th and 13th of August the chief of the general staff of Count Rüdiger appeared in the headquarters at Világos, for the purpose of arranging with me, where the act of surrender was to take place on the following day. The result of this conference was as follows:

The voluntary disarming of the army under my command should be made at Szöllös—at the point of junction of the roads from Kis-Jenő by Zaránd and from Világos by Uj-Pankota to Boros-Jenő—on the ground between the southern outskirts of Szöllös and the Mühlen canal, crossing the road from Világos.

The corps of Count Rüdiger, very early on the 13th of August, approaching from Kis-Jenő, should inclose the above-designated ground on the east, north, and west, occupying with a part of its troops the brook Csigér, between Moroda and Szöllös, as well as the latter place, and establishing its main body between Zaránd and Szöllös, with its front toward the east.

The army under my command, on the contrary, in order to afford the Russian corps the time necessary for taking up the indicated positions, should not start from Világos for Szöllös till late in the forenoon of the 13th of August, followed by the column of the Russian cavalry corps standing between Világos and Arad. This column would finally have to occupy the Mühlen canal also, as soon as the last Hungarian troops had crossed it.

## CHAPTER LXXX.

On the 13th of August, 1849, between ten and eleven o'clock in the forenoon, their last encampment was left by the shattered remains of those troops whose victories had certainly preserved Hungary from the disgrace of having failed in a proper answer to the "Olmütz octroyed," but at the same time had enabled Louis Kossuth to give a turn to *the just contest for the law* by which he—depriving the nation of its just right—could only gain for himself the thanks of the Austrian government, never those of his fatherland.

In company with some officers of the army, whom their duty did not confine close to the troops, I pushed forward toward Szöllös.

Not far from Uj-Pankota we met a Russian trumpet, who was charged, in the name of his chief, Count Rüdiger, to ask from me a definite verbal declaration, that it was my sincere determination unconditionally to lay down our arms at the place appointed.

I unhesitatingly made the desired declaration; and in order fully to convince the trumpet of my sincerity, I requested him immediately to conduct me to his chief.

This the trumpet agreed to, and remained close by me while we (my companions and myself) pursued our ride to the Mühlen canal before Szöllös. Here the trumpet left us, in order, first of all, to carry my answer to his chief; while we awaited his return on the bridge over the canal, and meanwhile could convince ourselves that the disposition of the hostile troops had really been carried out as agreed upon. The open ground enabled us to perceive, in the east, a hostile column on the right bank of the brook Csigér between Moroda and Szöllös. The latter place lies to the north of the canal bridge; from the outskirts glittered the Russian helmets, and in the west, leaning to the left on Zaránd, to the right on the Mühlen canal, was deployed the main body of the enemy's force. In this direction the trumpet turned

from the high road, after he had left us by the canal bridge. He soon returned, and told me that Count Rüdiger was waiting for me in front of his troops.

Followed by my companions, I immediately proceeded to the place which had been pointed out. As we drew near to the hostile position, we perceived in front of it an isolated group of horsemen; and the next moment, one of them detaching himself from the party singly approached us.

My companions now stopped; I advanced alone up to the rider, saluted him, and gave my name; for I supposed that I now stood before the commander of the Russian corps, General Count Rüdiger. And such was indeed the case. Count Rüdiger seemed filled with the noble desire of alleviating as much as possible the depression of my present situation; for his first words to me contained the frank assurance that he fully appreciated the motive which had induced us voluntarily to abandon the prosecution of the war; and in confirmation of this he offered me his right hand. An audible, involuntary exclamation of my companions betrayed how agreeably they were surprised at this proof of esteem from the victor to the now unfortunate leader of the vanquished. This exclamation also betrayed, perhaps, the sudden revival of hope in the heart of many a one of my companions—a hope which it seemed, however, impossible for the man to fulfill by whom it had—with the purest intention, I am convinced—been for a moment revived, and afterward nourished.

Taking the respectful demeanor of the hostile leader toward me for the emanation of a certain reverence, not perhaps for my person, but for the greatness of our misfortune, I delivered to Count Rüdiger, together with a list of our requests, the names also of those members of the provisional Government and of the Diet who had voluntarily attached themselves to the army, and who had requested me to obtain, if possible, for them at least permission to remain with the army during its captivity, until the fate of each of them had been decided.

The very modest request of these resigned men could now scarcely be disregarded; but Count Rüdiger not only guaranteed to them, as to all who surrendered, the undisturbed possession of the property they had with them, but consented that all generals and officers should retain their arms. For the remaining re-



quests, which he had not the power to grant, he promised to use all his influence with his chief.

In anticipation, I felt myself called upon to assure Count Rüdiger of the most hearty thanks of my companions in misfortune.

The inquiry on my part, whether I had to await special orders to march up the army under my command, and the answer, by which the arranging of the plan for our self-disarming was left to my own discretion, formed the remainder of the only conversation which took place, *previous* to the completion of the surrender, between Count Rüdiger and myself.

Meanwhile the *tête* of the Hungarian army was leisurely approaching the Mühlen canal. The narrow carriage-road of the bridge easily caused stoppages in defiling over it; and to prevent this, I immediately returned with my companions to the bridge, and ordered the army to form *en masse* in two lines on the ground between the Mühlen canal and the village of Szöllös—the front toward the Russian main army at Zaránd. The first line was formed by the third and seventh corps; the second line by the Arad division of reserve and the first corps; in the space between the lines were collected all the batteries; the train of the army was behind the second line.

The oppressive sultriness of the atmosphere—the sky unclouded and not a breath of air stirring—unusually retarded the march of the troops. Besides, they had nothing more to lose.

As the last division of the army crossed the bridge, the sun was just setting.

And in the twilight of the 13th of August, 1849, General Count Rüdiger, the commander of a Russian army corps, inspected the Hungarian troops under my command. But the cavalry was dismounted, and had their swords hung on the pommels of their saddles; the muskets of the infantry were piled in pyramids; the artillery was drawn close together and unmanned; the flags and standards lay there unprotected before the disarmed ranks.

## CHAPTER LXXXI.

IN the night between the 13th and 14th of August 1849, I was escorted from the Russian camp at Zaránd to Kis-Jenő, and on the morning of the 14th likewise all the other participators in the laying down of arms.

At nightfall of the 14th I had to leave Kis-Jenő under the charge of a Russian staff-officer, to be conveyed in a carriage to Gross-Wardein, the head-quarters of the Russian army. The doctor, whose assistance I still needed, and three or four of my most-closely attached officers, were allowed to accompany me. The other generals, officers, and civil notabilities who were prisoners, received notice, in the course of the 14th of August, by means of a placard, to be prepared next morning likewise to set out for Gross-Wardein. As I subsequently learned, on the 15th they began the march from Kis-Jenő toward Gross-Wardein, but were led back from the station of Nagy-Szalonta to Sarkad (eight miles to the southwest of Gross-Wardein), and I accordingly in vain expected a re-union with them in Gross-Wardein.

The resolution, however, which I had definitively formed at Arad in the night between the 10th and 11th of August, to give the impulse to a speedy unbloody termination of the hopeless war, I had executed to its last consequences. Letters written by myself were already on their way to the commanders of the fortresses which were still occupied by Hungarian troops, as well as to the leaders of divers Hungarian corps and detachments isolated in the district of operations of the Russian army. The latter, in my letters, I distinctly called upon to follow my example: with regard to the former, I confined myself, as far as I recollect, to the simple communication of facts; and this from the twofold reason, that I could not overlook either the absolute situation of the commander of a fortress threatened by the enemy, nor the possibility of a not unconditional surrender being eventually offered to him.

The confidence of the troops once commanded by me had mostly been concentrated in those men, who, thoroughly under-

standing my mode of thought and action, had remained inaccessible to the suspicion, that in the unconditional laying down of our arms generally, or at least in the performance of this act before the Russians, I had had regard to the safety of my own person. Those, on the contrary, who had felt themselves perhaps moved to render me suspected of this intention had probably so little renown with the troops, or one so extremely unfavorable, that an attempt by them at rendering me suspected must have been unsuccessful.

Therein lies the solution of the enigma, how—in spite of my scrupulously avoiding any delusive pretensions to prospects of safety, nay, even simultaneously disavowing all such illusions—I could succeed in performing the act of surrender, without discipline being in any way considerably disturbed in the ranks of the army.

And had it pleased the victorious alliance, in consideration of the circumstances :

That I—although not agreeing with the “Debrezsin act of independance”—had nevertheless fought under its ægis against the “Olmütz octroyed,” for the carrying out of which such immense efforts had been made ;

That I further—although perceiving from the first that the protraction of the combat against the allied armies was hopeless—nevertheless, by summoning up all the moral and physical forces I could command, assisted to continue the war until at last Kossuth himself officially declared that all hope of Hungary’s carrying on the defense of the country any longer with a prospect of success was at an end ;

That I finally—although in consequence of the laying down of our arms some Russians and Austrians had their lives prolonged—had really determined upon and performed this act neither from love of those Russians and Austrians, nor from repenting of my acts ;

If, I say, in consideration of these obvious circumstances, it had pleased the victorious alliance not to overlook, that *I*, of all the actors in the laying down of our arms, was certainly the most unworthy of its clemency, and if it consequently had allowed me to fall, it would most probably the more certainly have spared *me* the posthumous fame of having betrayed my fatherland, or at least my companions, and *itself* the slander of having succeeded in subduing Hungary only by the aid of my treachery ; since,



so far as I know, neither *it* nor *I* have to fear the disclosure of any fact from which it could be proved that *it* had bartered its pardon for the surrender, or *I* the surrender for my pardon.

However, on the first day of my involuntary arrival at Gross-Wardein (the 15th of August), the Russian commander-in-chief ordered me to be brought before him; and although he received me with vehement reproaches about the obstinacy of my resistance, and plainly declared to me at first that besides my own life I had forfeited that also of my comrades—he nevertheless suddenly went on to a consideration of the voluntariness of our act of surrender; and concluded finally by a promise of interceding for pardon for me alone, though unsought for by me either directly or indirectly.

And hardly had eight days elapsed when an officer in the suite of the Russian commander-in-chief announced to me, in the name of the latter, that I had been pardoned by his majesty the Czar; further, that his majesty the Czar had intrusted his eldest son, the Grand Duke, heir to the throne, with the mission to obtain for me likewise the pardon of his majesty the Emperor of Austria; and that should this be refused me, I was to be taken to Russia, in virtue of the order of his majesty the Czar. At the same time this officer demanded my sword from me, and intimated that it was the wish of his serene highness Prince Paszkiewicz that I should immediately lay aside the Honvéd uniform, and dress as a civilian.

A few days after this occurrence the following documents were handed to me by the Austrian major, Norbert von Andrassy, adjutant to the person of Baron Haynau.

*"Chief Command of the Royal Imperial Army in Hungary.*

No. 186.

Secret.

"His Majesty, my most gracious emperor and sovereign, with the hereditary clemency of his most high person, has deigned to pardon you.

"You are, however, not allowed to reside in Hungary, but in another crown-land, and in the first instance Carinthia is assigned for your abode, whither you have to repair without delay under the conduct of the royal imperial Major von Andrassy.

"There is no objection to your taking with you your family and effects.

(Signed) "HAYNAU, Master of the Ordnance.

"HEAD-QUARTERS, ARAD, Aug. 26, 1849.

"M. ARTHUR VON GÖRGEI."

"M. Arthur von Görgei and his lady are obliged to travel in company with the adjutant of the person of his Excellency the commanding Master of the Ordnance Baron Haynau, the right honorable Major Norbert von Andrassy, as far as the place which he shall fix for both.

(Signed)

"COUNT STEPHEN SZIRMAY,  
Royal Imperial Lieut.-Colonel, and substitute  
of his Excellency the Royal Imperial Com-  
missary-in-chief Francis Count von Zichy.

"GROSS-WARDEIN, Aug. 27th, 1849."

The latter document was issued by the commissariat representing the Austrian government in the head-quarters of the Russian army.

And Major von Andrassy conducted me without more ado from Gross-Wardein by Crakow and Vienna to Klagenfurt.\*

While still in Gross-Wardein I had a foretaste of the injurious effect of all these things on my reputation. Already, in consequence of my separation from the rest of the prisoners, the rumor was spread, that I was about to be received into the Russian army as a general; and the circumstance that such a rumor found belief sufficiently proved of itself in what haste the public opinion has been to impress on the act of surrender the stamp of treason.

The facts which soon afterward, nay almost simultaneously, became publicly known, namely, that the Emperor of Russia retained to himself the decision about *my* fate exclusively, and ordered, on the contrary, all the other prisoners to be unreservedly delivered up to Austria, sufficed to complete the justification of the condemnatory judgment which had been passed upon me.

In addition to this, the Russians, on the occasion of our surrender, it was said, had again got into their hands a subordinate individual who had deserted to us. This man (while the army under my command was stationed between Miskolcz and Tokaj), as leader of a Russian patrol of cavalry, being sent from the Gyöngyös high road toward the passage of the Theiss between

\* Major von Andrassy during the whole time of his escort service—which, as I can very well conceive, was any thing but agreeable—behaved toward me in a most chivalrous manner. After our arrival at Klagenfurt, he had moreover the kindness to commend me to the protection of Captain von Kurzenborfer, at that time commander of the place; a man—I speak from my own experience—distinguished by the most humane disposition, and at the same time having the rare courage boldly to prove this by his conduct to the unfortunate, without respect of persons, even in opposition to public opinion.

Poroszló and Tiszafüred, at that time in our possession, had executed his determination of passing over to the enemy (into our ranks), abandoning his men. The detached commander of our column at Tiszafüred hereupon, on his own authority, had the deserter immediately escorted from Tiszafüred to Arad, as he wished to serve under Field-marshal Lieut. Bem. Nevertheless, instead of arriving at the Bem army, he happened to come into the camp of that which I commanded, and, through our surrender, before a Russian council of war.

Although the first knowledge I had of the existence of this individual was during my captivity, from a Russian staff-officer, who communicated to me the doings and destiny of the delinquent, as a topic of the day; nevertheless public opinion accused me of the intentional delivery of this Pole (in the "Pole" lies the point) to Russia, and welcomed therein an evident proof that I had shunned the use of no means to obtain pardon from the Czar.

Consequently it was to be foreseen, that the sum of eleven hundred gold half-imperials,\* which I had received from Prince

\* At the surrender, all the ready-money I possessed amounted to about fifty ducats in gold, and perhaps 2000 florins in Kossuth notes.† After the latter had been taken from me in the Russian head-quarters by order of the Austrian commissariat of the country, I was forced to sell my horses at any price, and immediately dismiss my servants. Prince Paszkiewicz, accidentally informed of this in the first days of my captivity, had the sum of 300 gold half-imperials placed at my disposal; and on the evening preceding my involuntary departure from Gross-Wardein the Prince in person handed to me a sum of 500 pieces of the same coin, when he had learned that my removal to Klagenfurt was not to take place at the expense of the state, and that the possibility of prolonging my existence was in no way secured to me, even for the immediate future.

Both sums, it is true, were offered to me as loans for an indefinite period, with the unmistakable intention of not wounding my feelings. My expectation, however, that the reaction of my revolutionary activity on my person would free me for ever from further care about support, having been disappointed by my unforeseen pardon, I was now unfortunately in the condition of being forced to accept with thanks what was called a loan, in spite of my apprehension of not being able again to repay it.

I have above stated the total sum received from Prince Paszkiewicz to amount to 1100 gold half-imperials, because, besides the 800 pieces, I had also received 300 to be distributed among the Hungarian officers who

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† The ducat = about 9s. 6d.; the florins = 2s.—*Trans.*



Paszkievich, would figure in the general judgment about me wholly as the reward for delivering up this Pole, if not even as the price of blood for the treason committed against the fatherland, or at least against my comrades.

However, although originally by no means a despiser of the public opinion in Hungary, I had nevertheless, *before* the 13th of August, 1849, ceased to respect it unreservedly—thanks to its numerous aberrations during the time, though but short, of our acquaintance.

And in fact it was the sorrowful future of Hungary and of my companions, not that of my public honor, which grieved me.

The future of *Hungary* was considered as lost after the surrender, even by *those* patriots who during the combat between Hungary and Austria had sided with the latter—but not in the field.\*

The future of a great part of my *companions* evidently fluctuated between prison and death.

Csányi was brought a day or two later than myself to Gross-Wardein in the strictest custody. He had with him in coin a part of the fortune of his ward, and earnestly requested a meeting with me, intending to forward this money through me to its owner. It was too late. A meeting was refused us. On the 14th of August, 1849, at Kis-Jenő, I had taken leave for ever (without having a presentiment of it) of Csányi, as well as of all my companions, with the exception of a few.

The other civilian notabilities, who had joined in the act of surrender, were treated, as I heard, at first less severely. I even spoke to some of them in Gross-Wardein. They were for the present sent to their homes by means of compulsory passports.

The hussars and Honvéds, from sergeant-major downwards (those also who had formerly been in the Austrian service), received an amnesty soon after the surrender of arms.

had been transported to Gross-Wardein, in part together with me, in part in the course of the next following days. These officers were thereby to be enabled to procure for themselves civilian attire, as they were to lay aside the Honvéd uniform immediately after their arrival at Gross-Wardein.

\* Whether these patriots had formerly entertained hopes, and of what kind, relative to the salvation of the fatherland, I know not. It may easily be conceived, that *before* the surrender I had no opportunity of coming in contact with any of them.

The generals and officers, however, were kept in custody. Baron Haynau had reserved to himself for a more suitable time the decision of their fate. I could not possibly be deceived as to the horrid meaning of this reservation.

So long as the unfortunate men, like myself, were detained prisoners by the Russians, I still hoped indeed to induce Prince Paszkiewicz to use his influence, of which he seemed too prodigal toward me, rather in favor of my companions. I proceeded on the supposition that the Russian commander-in-chief had come to the determination to interfere only for *my* safety, in consequence of the erroneous opinion that our surrender was to be considered as the necessary consequence of my *absolute* will. To convince Prince Paszkiewicz of the contrary was, therefore, the nearest object of my endeavors. I duly rendered prominent the spontaneousness of the assent of my comrades to the laying down of our arms, their co-operation in the accomplishment of this act, as well as the impossibility of executing it without their assent and co-operation; and moreover declared to the Russian commander-in-chief, that I did not in general value the pardon which he designed for me, and least of all if it should be the unchangeable fate of my companions to be delivered up to Baron Haynau.

However plainly Prince Paszkiewicz's decided inclination toward generosity was proved by the humane treatment which my comrades and myself enjoyed in the Russian camp, his answer nevertheless was always confined to the comfortless assurance that it was impossible for him to attend to my representations and prayers. And when the delivery of the prisoners to an Austrian escort had taken place—although I knew perfectly well in how noble a manner Prince Paszkiewicz had directly solicited the pardon of the Emperor of Austria for my companions—I could not but the more certainly despair of their preservation, as in the mean time the influence of some things which had happened seemed in itself to be sufficient to endanger in the highest degree the life of these unfortunate men.

General Damjanics, commander of the fortress of Arad, immediately after the laying down of our arms, had informed Count Rüdiger of his determination to surrender this fortress only to Russian troops. The Russian General, Buturlin, charged to open negotiations with the fortress, and provided for this purpose with

a letter from me to General Damjanics, went consequently on the 15th of August to Alt-Arad, and obtained a capitulation, in which the garrison of Alt-Arad engaged to evacuate the place on the 17th of August in the afternoon, at discretion, but only before Russian troops ; and General Buturlin, on his part, guaranteed the non-presence of Austrian troops at the act of surrender. The fortress had, however, been blockaded on the left bank of the Maros by an Austrian corps, under Field-marshal Lieut. Schlick, who, before it commenced negotiating with the Russians, had summoned it to surrender, but had received a decided negative answer. When Baron Haynau, therefore, was informed of the treaty for capitulation, which had been concluded immediately after between the garrison and General Buturlin, he issued an order to Count Schlick, the execution of which must place the Russian general in the fatal alternative of either not keeping his word to the garrison of Arad (for the non-presence of Austrian troops at the act of surrender), or of opposing in a hostile manner his troops to those under Count Schlick. Count Rüdiger—early informed of Haynau's order, and perceiving that General Buturlin would be obliged, in virtue of his treaty, to prevent the execution of this order even by armed force, and that consequently a conflict between the Austrian and Russian troops would be unavoidable—dispatched without delay an officer to the Austrian head-quarters at Temesvár, for the purpose of inducing Baron Haynau to revoke his order to Schlick. The deputy of Count Rüdiger found Baron Haynau obstinate in a high degree ; and only the impressive representation of the Russian officer, that through this order the existence of Austria, scarcely saved, would again be called in question, at the last moment succeeded in obtaining its revocation. Count Rüdiger had beforehand charged his deputy at once to convey Baron Haynau's counter-order to Count Schlick. The latter—on the one hand, firmly resolved, from well understanding the interests of his Monarch, not to obey Haynau's order ; on the other hand, believing the Baron capable of punishing his inevitable disobedience in the most inconsiderate manner—in the Russian officer hastening back from Temesvár to Arad with Haynau's counter-order, hailed the saviour of his life.

The news of these occurrences, rapidly spread through the camp of the Russian army, gave rise to remarks upon Baron



Haynau's personal character which appeared by no means to spring from feelings of esteem. Haynau's proclamation at Temesvár on the 18th of August, 1849, by which the Russian army felt itself sorely wounded, had the effect of exposing not only the person of the Austrian commander-in-chief, but likewise his army, to these remarks.

The Russian officers, who, following the noble example of their generals, from the day of the surrender had endeavored to alleviate as much as possible the captivity of my companions in war, in their excitement against the Austrians now went so far as remarkably to distinguish the Hungarian prisoners, sometimes in the presence of Austrian officers, nay even to treat the latter with undisguised disrespect before the former. It soon came to encounters between separate individuals of the allied armies; and rumor, which reports every thing in a fabulous manner, developed from this by degrees the certainty of a war being already about to break out between Austria and Russia, in which Hungary was of course not to espouse the side of Austria. However, the circumstance that the prisoners were delivered up at Sarkat to an Austrian detachment deprived the nascent rumors of more than a merely ephemeral existence; and only the facts, on which these rumors were based, endured and *operated afterward*, and this presumptively to the unavoidable destruction of these unfortunate men; for all that I had hitherto learnt relative to the character of Baron Haynau increased my apprehension that he would scarcely fail, in deciding upon the fate of my companions, to make these defenseless Hungarians pay for all the mortification caused, especially to his self-love, by armed Russians.

And so long as *my* pardon was valid only in Russia, *not in Austria also*, he could indulge his impulse to do so the more heedlessly, as even the most copious use of the *jus gladii* committed to him could more naturally be represented as a state necessity to free united Austria.

But from the moment when the Emperor of Austria was also pleased to pardon *me*, the rule of the *jus gladii* over those who had been under my command against Austria must, according to my conviction, have ceased to be necessary to the state of Austria.

THE END.



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